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Education Issue

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THE COOL GENERATION AND THE CHURCH

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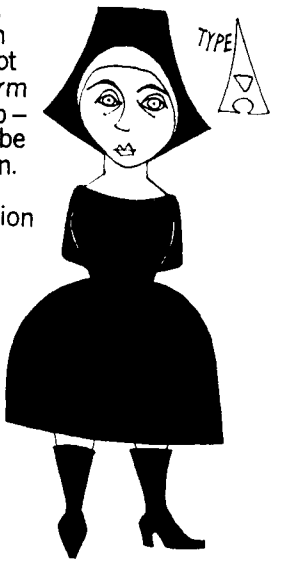
NEWS AND VIEWS

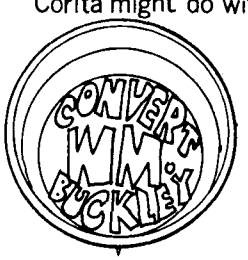
HABITS

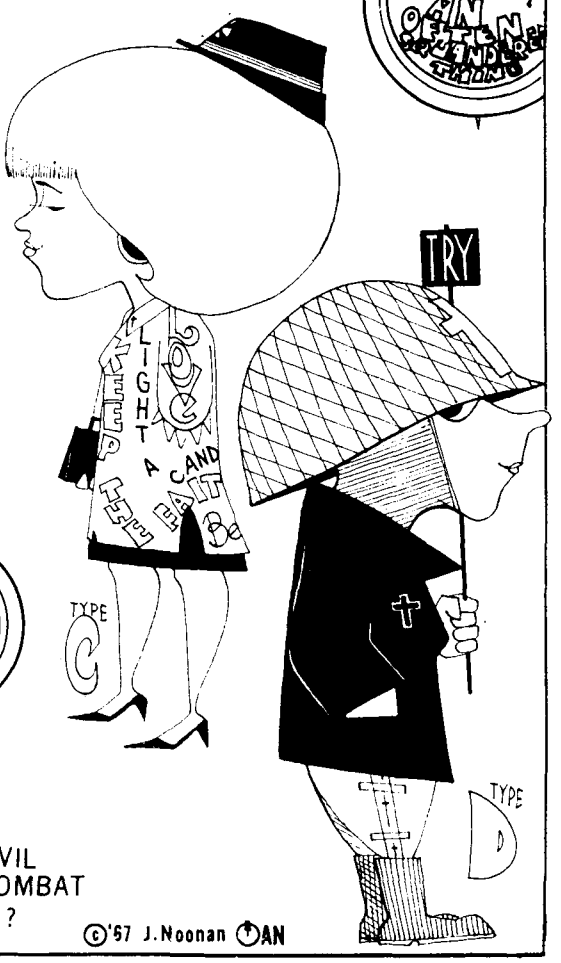
It is not easy to develop a good habit, as any nun can tell you. Some orders do not provide an adequate uniform allowance. That means up-dating of the habit must be accomplished by alteration. Sister-type "A" illustrates where renewal-by-alteration can lead.



Often the sisters within an order divide on the issue of change. Some insist that the old-time raiment is good enough. The others opt for a habit that would be a sign to the modern world. The compromise illustrated by Sister-type "B" has not been tried by any order as of this writing. However, it does seem to offer a logical way out of an unholy bind.

The tendency of the most advanced orders is shown by the costume of Sister-type "C". The unique feature of the costume is the disposable paper smock which permits sister to display uplifting slogans. Think of what Sister Corita might do with a chance to design holy smocks.





WHILE TRENDS IN COSTUMING HAVE RECEIVED ALL THE ATTENTION THEY DESERVE, A NEGLECTED POSSIBILITY REMAINS UNEXPLORED. CONSIDER SISTER-TYPE "D", WHO IS SHOWN IN ARMY HELMET, PADDED JACKET AND METAL-TOED COMBAT BOOTS. SUCH AN OUTFIT IS APPROPRIATE FOR OCCASIONAL USE BY THOSE WHO MARCH IN CIVIL RIGHTS DEMONSTRATIONS. IF ONE IS ENTERING A COMBAT ZONE, SHOULD SHE NOT DRESS FOR THE OCCASION?

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CORRESPONDENCE

Seminarians and Ghettos

New York

To the Editors: SEMINARIANS FROM NEW YORK AND BROOKLYN DIOCESES HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE GHETTO WITH COURAGE, DEDICATION, AND THEIR SUPERIORS' ENCOURAGEMENT. I HAVE SEEN THEIR EXCELLENT SERVICE IN ACTION. YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS COLUMN SEEMED TO BE IGNORANT OF THIS FACT OF APPROVED SEMINARIAN SERVICE IN VISTA-TYPE PROJECTS.

FRANK C. ARRICALE
Member
Mayor Lindsay's Summer Task Force

Huntington, L.I.

To the Editors: John Deedy asks (Sept. 22), "Who ever heard of sending seminarians into slums and ghettos as part of their training?"

I did, and with 40 or 50 other seminarians of Brooklyn have given my last four vacations to working in the slums and ghettos. . . JOSEPH P. TOOMEY

Reply

The issue is not the dedication of individual seminarians, nor free-time and vacation apostolates freely chosen by them, but the formal linking of seminary training with humanitarian public service programs, which, to quote others, would "get future priests out where the battles are." JOHN DEEDY

The New Modernists

Jemez Springs, N.M.

To the Editors: William C. Storey's review of *The Formation of Christendom*, by Christopher Dawson (Sept. 8), is an example of "modern triumphalism." Such expressions, in reference to Chesterton, Belloc, McNabb, Gill and Knox as "How the giants of yesteryear have bit the dust!" show how self-satisfied

(Continued on page 38)

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THE GOD QUESTION

This Education Issue is largely devoted to a student symposium, and we recommend it to all our readers, but especially to educators and to those concerned with the Church. In their comments the participants took us at our word and spoke frankly about their beliefs and disbeliefs; we are grateful to them, and we think that what they had to say is highly significant.

There is much about the members of the younger generation, or at least many of them, that is heartening: their honesty, their search for truth, their basic seriousness; these qualities are illustrated in the symposium. But those who can take absolutely no comfort from the exchange, we think, are those who are rigidly committed to the Church almost exactly as it is, the Church as historic institution requiring no more than a little touching up here and there. If there is one thing that clearly emerges from the student exchange, it is that most of the participants have little interest in and even less patience with the institutional Church. For them the Church can indeed be, to use Father Robert Adolfs' phrase, "The Grave of God."

To some this fact may be surprising, but it really should not be. The Church has become increasingly irrelevant in our society, and increasingly restricted to the private sphere. Even the language of the institutional Church is that of another era, and the pomps it displays to the world are those of a feudal past. As a result, although the problem of belief in the modern world is a very real one, the focus of this problem is changing. Questions of belief in connection with the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection or even the very existence of God are natural enough, and not surprising. But, as Michael Novak and others have pointed out, more and more such questions mask the central problem, which is a growing disbelief in what should be God's chief spokesman on earth, the Church. This is one fact, we think, which is clearly underscored in this student discussion.

To most of the students who participated in the symposium and to very many others in their generation, the institutional Church is out of date and

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churchmen irrelevant, prisoners inside outmoded ways of thinking and acting. The questions churchmen raise are meaningless to the young, and they are, in addition, scandalized and repelled by much of what they see in the institutional Church. The rest of us may be able to find excuses for the Church which remained silent while six million Jews died or which for so long tolerated racial segregation in this country, but young people cannot. On the one hand they feel that they encounter few authentic believers in the Gospel, or at least few who can be distinguished from the rest of a safe and comfortable population. On the other hand, they cannot help but admire the dedication of those who have been called the secular saints, those who work in the secular city with total devotion but without religion. Small wonder if the faith of the younger generation suffers accordingly.

The fact is that the older generation—indeed, all of our recent history—has managed to identify the institutional Church with bourgeois, middle-class values for which a growing number of the young have only contempt. Many of them would claim, therefore, that they reject God, and in some cases this may be true. Often, however, the concept of God they reject is distorted and parochial, not the one true God but an idol made by human hands. Babbitt's God was no God at all, yet at this late date we still insist on holding it up for the younger generation to worship. The best of them will refuse to bow down before it, and this fact speaks well of them, not ill. Nietzsche was wrong and God is not dead; it is the smell of decaying idols that bothers many people.

THE PRIEST AS REBEL

Councils of the Church have seldom been unqualified successes. Whatever their achievement in terms of formal purpose, most Councils have managed to produce unforeseen and ofttimes undesirable side-effects. Some, while repudiating so-called heresies, have actually helped solidify them; some, like Vatican Council I, have spawned schisms.

Vatican II, it is rapidly becoming evident, has not escaped the conciliar hazard of double effect. Pope John's pastoral Council appears headed into history as the Council that had the unpastoral result of stirring rank-and-file clergy into rebellion against the strictures of hierarchy and institution. The evidence is not only in Holland and England; it is next door in Trenton and Lansing and Little Rock. And it increases by the day.

The assertions of the modern priest may be surprising; they may or may not be dignified and defensible, according to the individual case; in different parts of the world they have different prime causes. But in the light of the new social and theological emphases on person, all have an understandability—and, of course, a common consequence. The Church pays the penalty for taking its clergy too much for granted over much too long a period of time.

By the contrast it presented in certain conciliar emphases, Vatican II aggravated that historical condition. The Council Fathers were industrious about reinforcing their role as bishops; they were conscientious about refining the role of the laity. But the role of the priest in the reform and renewal of the Church was approached with astonishing casualness. The proof is in the Council documents, though in their end-product these manage to cover-over broad deficiencies of concern that were noticeable in the preparation of schemata and that were exposed in subsequent debates. Whatever all that, the Council did little to upgrade the lot of the average priest.

No body of bishops has taken its priests more for granted than the American hierarchy, and no hierarchy seems to be paying more dearly for its easy presumptions. In the American scheme of things, the priest has traditionally been the obedient and docile functionary of an authoritarian system. He had little room for initiative that was foreign to the will of the bishop, and less room for independence. Generations of priests endured the repressions and restraints that were part and parcel of that mode of existence, but today's priest will not. He insists on freedom and responsibility commensurate with adulthood, education and office, and he is willing to battle publicly for them.

The problem is that the majority of American bishops seem not to appreciate the gravity of the situation—not at least to the point of easing the grip that locks too many priests in a ministry they find adolescent and inconsequential in terms of today's problems. Trenton's rebel-priest, Father George Hafner, said recently that the American priest has reached the point of the American Negro. He's fed up and he's ready to revolt. Unless the bishops understand this quickly and extend to priests new independence and authority, even in such ordinarily sacrosanct areas as the liturgy, they may soon find their rectories as depleted as their seminaries.

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Knocking Down the Language Walls

It has long been an American illusion that for a child born in the United States English is not a foreign language; therefore, virtually all instruction in the schools must be through the medium of English. Some states (New York included) have mandated this ethnocentrism in statutes which expressly forbid instruction in any language but English. One result was that the schools became the agencies of social disaffection, cultural assault, and enforced assimilation. The schools had to minister to children who brought with them myriad cultures and a multiplicity of tongues. More often than not (almost

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always in the cities where immigrants clustered) the children also were poor. And within the perimeter of this poverty were cultural differences, language handicaps, social alienation and disaffection. In this sense, poor Negroes, migrating from rural areas to the urban ghettos of the 1960's, Puerto Rican migrants to the mainland, and the Mexican-American poor, largely an urban minority, are not newcomers to the American schools, nor do they present American educators with new problems.

In its efforts to "assimilate" all of its charges, the American school very often destroyed the cultural identity of the child; it forced him to leave his ancestral language at the schoolhouse door; it developed in the child an ambivalence of language, of culture, of ethnicity, and of personal self-affirmation. It held up to the children mirrors in which they saw, not themselves, but the stereotyped middle-class, white, English-speaking child who allegedly embodied what the American child was (or ought) to be. For the minority child, the images which the school fashioned were cruel deceptions. In the enforced acculturation there was bitterness and confusion, but tragically, too, there was the rejection of the wellsprings of identity, and more often than not, the failure of achievement. The non-English-speaking child (almost inevitably poor) was the easy victim of cultural assault, and his ancestral language was a target against which the school mounted relentless resources.

Against this tragic background and quixotic effort, largely unnoticed, is a "sleeper" amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) which in essence proposes that we banish the ghosts of ethnocentrism and cultural imperialism, and turn to the cultivation of individual differences which better reflect our pluralistic society.

The history of this "sleeper" amendment is a good illustration of what Kenneth Clark has characterized as "the dilemmas of power." Where would one have sought the power in the Congress to recognize the particular needs of Puerto Rican children, if previous Congresses had chosen largely to ignore millions of other children who were non-English-speaking? The tactic here was obviously to relate the Puerto Rican child to the needs of another group long indigenous in America but equally long disenfranchised, and for whom English was not their native language. In the five-state area of the Southwest (Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, California) there are at least 1.75 million Mexican-American school children whose linguistic, cultural and psychological handicaps cause them to experience, in general, academic failure in our schools, or at best limit them to only mediocre success. The Mexican-American child classically demonstrated that an almost inevitable concomitant of poverty was low educational achievement. Thus, it was out of Texas, unlikely as it may seem, that an extraordinary amendment to the ESEA was proposed.

On Jan. 17, 1967, Ralph Yarborough (D.-Texas) introduced in the Senate S.428, which proposed "to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in order to provide assistance to local educational agencies in establishing bi-lingual American education programs and to provide certain other assistance to promote such programs." At long last the Congress had before it legislation which would make legitimate the cultivation of individual differences in our schools. Understandably, Senator Yarborough was concerned with the problems of his Mexican-American constituents, but his bill explicitly noted, "For the purpose of this Title, Spanish-speaking elementary and secondary students means elementary and secondary school students born in, or one or both of whose parents were born in, Mexico or Puerto Rico, and, in states for which such information is available, other students with Spanish surnames." The very proposal of the bill was tantamount to the recognition that Mexican-American children had been neglected by American schools.

But Senator Yarborough's legislation went far beyond this elemental recognition. It proposed (1) bi-lingual educational programs; (2) the teaching of Spanish as the native language; (3) the teaching of English as a second lauguage; (4) programs designed to impart to Spanish-speaking students a knowledge of and pride in their ancestral culture and language; (5) efforts to attract and retain as teachers promising individuals of Mexican or Puerto Rican descent; and (6) efforts to establish closer cooperation between the school and the home. What extraordinary proposals!

As was to be expected, Senator Yarborough's bill (which had as co-sponsors Mr. Javits and Mr. Kennedy of New York) created a flurry of activity in the House (although the bill went largely unnoticed outside the Congress) and a spate of companion House bills were proposed. Chief among them was H.R.9840 offered by James H. Scheuer (D.-New York). Congressman Scheuer wished to include not only Spanish-speaking students, as Yarborough proposed, but all those whose native language is not English. Scheuer asked for five times the money Senator Yarborough had proposed ($25,000,000 as against $5,000,000 for fiscal year 1967-68); further, his bill provides for participation by full-time non-public school students (children in parochial and other private schools).

Of course, a few objections have been raised against such legislation. Some linguists have objected to linking the bill to poverty; they insist that the bill be completely unrestricted to allow the cultivation of a vast bi-lingual resource. But this is truly another problem. What the legislation has really proposed (no matter how awkwardly, and despite all the programming intricacies which will have to be worked out) is that the school, as a social institution which serves the children of an open society, must build on the cultural strengths which the child

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brings to the classroom: to cultivate in this child ancestral pride; to reinforce (not destroy) the language he natively speaks; and to give this child the sense of personal identification so essential to his social maturation.

Senator Yarborough's Senate Bill 428 was unanimously reported out of the Senate Subcommittee on Education in August. If it achieves passage, his "sleeper" will have thrust greatness upon him, and Texas will have become as illustrious in educational history as Massachusetts.

FRANK M. CORDASCO

(Dr. Frank Cordasco, sociologist and author, is professor of education, Montclair State College, N.J.)

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FOOT-DRAGGING IN WASHINGTON

THE UNFAIR HOUSING AUTHORITY

Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi, interestingly, has become the latest sponsor of a fair housing bill. In an effort to assure that the relatively mild bill for the protection of civil rights workers which has passed the House would not become law, Eastland would have his Senate Judiciary Committee append a fair housing measure to it, thereby virtually guaranteeing its defeat.

That the inclusion of a fair housing provision is still enough of a kiss of death to appeal to Senator Eastland indicates the intractibility of the problem.

Fair housing is one area of the civil rights battle that has scarcely been touched by federal legislation or Supreme Court decisions. The Court did rule against the overt bigotry of restrictive covenants (Shelley v. Kramer); and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act bans discrimination in federally-assisted programs. However, it specifically excludes insurance programs, which account for most government activity in housing.

Ironically, housing is probably the one area where a real degree of integration might be achieved almost overnight. Meaningful integration of local schools has been drawn out to a snail's pace, almost always contingent on agonizingly slow neighborhood integration. And, unlike education or employment, equality in housing does not require that the massive legacy of denied opportunity and deficient training first be overcome. More decent low and middle income housing, of course, is also a necessary condition, but the availability of existing housing on the basis of genuine equality of opportunity could do much to loosen the stranglehold on the ghetto Negro.

Several schemes to increase the number of low and middle income units have been offered to Congress this year. These range from measures to expand federal programs in public housing, to the Percy and Kennedy private incentive bills, to more money for rent supplements and urban renewal, to beefed-up FHA authority. President Johnson, moreover, has instructed the Department of Housing and Urban Development to produce its own private incentive bill.

One such effort, co-sponsored by three liberals on the House Subcommittee on Housing, includes an indirect fair housing provision. By prohibiting federally-insured banks from making mortgage loans to persons who fail to give legally enforceable non-discriminatory pledges, the measure would reach over 70 percent of the housing market. The sponsors of the bill, Congressmen Reuss, Moorhead and Ashley, feel that this approach would resolve the constitutional objections raised by Senator Dirksen and others in connection with a blanket fair housing law. The cutting edge of the bill is the authority of the federal government to impose conditions for its banking insurance. This provision would, in effect, extend President Kennedy's Executive Order of November, 1962, which prohibits discrimination in housing built with federal assistance. This was the famous "stroke of the pen," which Kennedy as candidate had challenged Eisenhower to enact. (Kennedy was widely criticized in turn for waiting nearly two years before signing such an order himself.)

The Kennedy Order affects between 15 and 20 percent of the new housing market. It also applies to some 50,000 properties acquired by FHA annually through mortgage default, which are then sold for FHA through commercial brokers who are required by the Order to sell on a non-discriminatory basis.

Since 1962, the effect of the Order has been practically nil. FHA sees itself essentially as a business agency, and is extremely anxious to remain on cordial terms with its clients, the housing industry. FHA itself is an employer of former real estate men and insurance salesmen. Its first constituency is the industry, its second the white suburban buyer. As usual, the Negro comes last, if at all. Although it was conceived to help provide housing for those unable to afford conventional mortgages, FHA has been principally responsible for the postwar boom in suburban housing; it is not unusual to see advertisements for $30,000 houses offering FHA loans. Though now nominally under the Department of Housing and Urban Development, FHA in actuality continues to function almost autonomously.

Although the Order requires FHA to "take all action necessary and appropriate to prevent discrimination because of race, color, creed or national origin," FHA has interpreted this to mean only the provision of redress for buyers who encounter discrimination. Unfortunately, Negro buyers who have the sophistication and determination

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to press complaints in the face of repeated and humiliating efforts to dissuade purchase are a tiny minority of those discriminated against. At best, a case will end with an informal hearing and the admission by the builder that a "misunderstanding" occurred: FHA seldom invokes sanctions or even has follow-up spot checks.

To the extent that the Order is enforced at all, it is done through the efforts of voluntary fair housing groups. One such group, the American Friends Service Committee, recently released a comprehensive "Report to the President on Equal Opportunity in Housing," which has received little public notice. The report is a blistering and fully documented critique of FHA and the Veterans Administration, concluding that: "Executive Order 11063 is being widely and flagrantly violated by builders, brokers, and lenders . . . Implementation of the Order by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Veterans Administration (VA) has at best been ineffective and at worst subversive of the goal of equal opportunity in housing." Secretary Robert C. Weaver responded to the charges by citing a number of changes pending but in no way did he dispute the findings of the Report.

Happily the case apparently has not stopped with this confrontation and admission. Most recently FHA has come under growing criticism from a bipartisan group of House liberals, led by Manhattan Democrat William Fitts Ryan who called an informal hearing to deal with the enforcement of the Executive Order. Ryan himself had been central in the effort to pressure the Pentagon to declare off-limits certain off-base housing whose owners practiced discrimination against Negro G.I.'s. The conclusions drawn by Ryan's group correspond closely to the findings of the American Friends Report. It found that in fact the Order is "being enforced on a case by case method, and on the initiative of the complainant." Even the reform proposed, which would require the FHA to intercede on behalf of a minority buyer, "remains merely an embellishment on the case method."

Most important is the Ryan group's recommendation that FHA make non-discriminatory housing a matter of policy, as the Executive Order designated. The Congressmen's report recommended that "instead of merely requiring that proven discriminators take 'affirmative action' to get back into the FHA's good graces, FHA might well require that advertising of all housing provided with FHA assistance refer to the equal opportunity policy. On-site posters could also be required making the policy clear." FHA takes the position that this requirement would alienate the industry and damage FHA's position, which seems itself an acknowledgement that discrimination in housing is pervasive and that present FHA policies do not remedy the situation.

The likelihood of even an indirect fair-housing bill's being passed this year is remote. Rioters will not be rewarded, in the current argot of bigotry. Moreover, since FHA is unwilling or unable to enforce the existing Executive Order, whose mandate is clear, the fate of a blanket fair housing law would probably be similar.

Ryan's group has begun in a small but perhaps significant way to expose foot-dragging on the part of a government agency charged with a responsibility it refuses to carry out. The problem of the enforcement of non-discriminatory statutes which could thwart racist practices is immense, to some extent, no doubt, because of the evaporation of interested constituencies. Ryan in effect has begun what may become a Herculean effort to move a bureaucracy entrenched in practices which encourage further ghetto uprisings and which continue to make a mockery of our highest statements of policy.

JONATHAN EISEN

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CRIME STATISTICS

THE GREAT JUGGLING ACT

The latest crime wave has occurred in the pages of *Look* magazine. "The Shocking Rise of Murder" in the September 19th issue states that homicides in the first half of 1967 rose 25 percent in New York City, 43 percent in Chicago, 200 percent in Memphis, and so on.

These increases are dramatic, but dubious. The statistical base for each of 12 cities listed is too small to be significant. Also, most murders are committed in the first half of a given year, and with the expected decline in the latter half of 1967, this year will show only a slight increase over 1966. Even if the decline does not appear, the 1967 murder rate will still be far below what was reported annually during the 1930's.

Violence is a special American problem, as every Vietnamese peasant knows. There are three murders a day in New York City, and only two a week in all of Great Britain. But the rate does not appear to be rising. Statistics show a gradual but steady decline in the homicide rate since 1933. In terms of population shifts, it may be declining rapidly.

As the President's Crime Commission reported, most violent crimes in America are committed in late adolescence, around the age of 20. According to a Census Bureau estimate, there were 35 percent more 20-year-olds in the U.S. during the year ending July 1967 than in the year ending July 1966. This would mean a rapid rise in the murder rate, if the new 20-year-olds are anything like their predecessors. But this kind of rise has not oc-

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curred. Despite *Look*'s best efforts, murder is not keeping pace with the size of the adult population, at least in the age brackets where most murders occur.

Liberals as well as conservatives play the "crime wave" game. Liberals are interested in gun control, conservatives in combating "crime in the streets," which means Negroes. In general, the conservatives, led by J. Edgar Hoover and Everett Dirksen, do a better job of juggling statistics.

Hoover, pointing to FBI statistics, claims a 48 percent rise in crime in the past six years, and links the alleged rise to Vietnam criticism and civil rights drives in countless articles for the barbershop press and fundamentalist Protestant magazines. Dirksen and his counterpart in the House, Gerald Ford, claim a 62 percent crime rise in six years, and use the figure in repeated sallies against riots and rapine that presumably delight their anti-urban and anti-civil rights constituency.

Alas, there is no firm evidence that crime has increased at all in the past six years, although it is known that the rate has been phenomenally higher all these years than J. Edgar Hoover ever dreamed. The President's Crime Commission, in three separate sociological surveys of the victims of crime, showed that there is "several times" as much crime as is reported in the F.B.I.'s Uniform Crime Reports—perhaps 12 times as much. The "rapid rise," which conservatives try to link to civil disobedience and civil rights, is simply due to better reporting of the crime that was actually there all the time.

Ironically, increased police effectiveness seems to increase the recorded crime rate, In Chicago, said Daniel Glaser, chairman of the sociology department at the University of Illinois, the rate rose after police reforms because minority groups felt more confidence that police would actually investigate, and so reported more crimes to authorities.

The National Opinion Research Center in Chicago, which did one of the three surveys for the Crime Commission, found that over half of all crime is never reported, ranging from 11 percent of all auto thefts to 90 percent of consumer-fraud cases. In crimes of violence alone, NORC reported a rate of 357.8 per 100,000 population—almost double the FBI's 184.7 rate. (The only area where the FBI reported more crime than actually occurred was in auto thefts. There is a long literature, produced by disenchanted ex-FBI agents, charging that the Bureau manipulates auto-theft statistics in order to make the monthly crime quota imposed by J. Edgar Hoover. This is presumably why so many autos are reported stolen at the end of the month.)

The NORC study was a survey of the victim experience of every member of a household, based on interviews with one member in each of 10,000 randomly selected households. It showed that forcible rapes were 3½ times the reported rate, burglaries three times, and aggravated assaults and larcenies of $50-and-over more than double.

Crimes go unreported because of personal embarrassment (as in most rape cases), lack of confidence in police, fear of reprisal, because the victim wanted to deal with the criminal privately, or because the victim was too confused or didn't know how to go about contacting police. Thus Mr. Hoover's 48 percent crime rise shows only that he is now 48 percent more aware of what is happening in his area of competence. This better reporting can be traced to more sophisticated police computational systems and the gradual acculturation of minority groups who previously either had no truck at all with police, or simply couldn't cope with the reporting of a crime.

(Demographic shifts may also play a part. The South is traditionally the prime area of violent crime, and as rural Southerners—black and white—move to Northern cities, their crimes are much better reported. "Nigger crimes"—crimes by Negroes against Negroes—are not much bothered with in the South, and even murders of black men often go unrecorded. One recalls all the "wrong" Negro bodies fished out of Southern rivers during the search for the corpses of Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman. The export of the South's violent tradition may, incidentally, increase the Northern crime rate for a while.)

"Crime-in-the-streets" theoreticians will derive no comfort from the report of the Crime Commission. It showed that 87 percent of all murders, 65 percent of all rapes and 75 percent of all assaults are not committed by strangers, but by relatives, friends and persons the victims knew at least casually.

"Crime in the streets," if taken to mean crimes by strangers or by Negroes against whites, is a tiny component of the crime problem in America, no matter what Mr. Hoover thinks of Stokely Carmichael. Less than 10 percent of aggravated assaults were found to be interracial. In general, Negroes assault Negroes, whites assault whites. The only really interracial crime of violence was found to be robbery: in robberies committed by Negroes in Washington, D.C., 56 percent of the victims were white. Negroes, in fact, are most in need of police protection. A Negro man in Chicago is six times as likely to be victimized by crime as a white man, and a Negro woman is nearly eight times as likely to be a victim as a white woman.

"Victim research" is now the most promising route to better knowledge of crime in America. The FBI computational system sheds no light at all on the questions criminologists and sociologists want answered. It depends on the accuracy and judgment of hundreds of police chiefs, with different methods of reporting conceptions of what a crime is. It has also managed not to notice most of the crimes committed for several generations. From now on its accuracy will be judged by how it accords with victim surveys by sociologists, and not the other way round.

JOHN LEO

(John Leo, a former associate editor of Commonweal, *is on the staff of the New York* Times.*)*

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THE COOL GENERATION AND THE CHURCH

A COMMONWEAL SYMPOSIUM

The following symposium features six students from Catholic college backgrounds, brought together in New York by Commonweal *for an exchange of views among themselves in a taping session with the Editors.*

Frank Carling was graduated last June from Fordham College, where he was president of the student government. He is now studying international law at Yale.

John J. Burke Jr., a Jesuit seminarian, studied at both Holy Cross and Boston Colleges. He recently began graduate work in English at Northwestern.

William T. Wilson is an undergraduate at La Salle College in Philadelphia.

Mary Frances Campion, a graduate student in Temple University's school of education, is an alumna of Rosary College, River Forest, Ill.

Martha Ann Brazier is a junior in the school of education at Boston College.

Kathleen A. McHale, a 1963 graduate of Newton College of the Sacred Heart, in Massachusetts, has done work toward a master's degree at Stanford.

Most of the students have been associated with student community and activist organizations, notably in the areas of peace and civil rights.

Editor: We might begin from where some of the participants in our earlier symposium on the woman intellectual in the Church ended their discussion. Rosemary Ruether said that among students she knew there definitely is no interest in any doctrine about the supernatural. The interest is in human values. And Mary Daly said that many students won't even read Catholic theologians anymore. They feel they only get the party line, with some liberal ideas thrown in. Do you think they catch the flavor of the contemporary Catholic student?

Carling: There is not so much rejection of the supernatural as there is rejection of the idea that there's a great difference between supernatural and human values. Students today are trying to find some way of fusing the two.

Burke: The type of thing Rosemary Ruether is describing has been occurring in Catholic schools for a long time, but I think it a bit inaccurate to say people are uninterested in reading Catholic theologians. Look at how Teilhard de Chardin is read. I do admit, though, that in many respects Catholic theology is sterile, and I'm not particularly convinced by anybody on the contemporary scene that it is balanced.

Wilson: The reason I don't read Catholic theologians is because I find it hard to read with my eyes closed; I fall asleep when I read Catholic theologians. Young people I know are interested in living, about how tomorrow's going to get on, about whether you're going to be here tomorrow. We're interested in having fun. And we're not such bad people either; we're not killing people. But we're not obeying sex laws either.

Campion: It's bad to generalize and say students aren't reading Catholic theologians. I think people are more drawn to what is relevant to what is happening to them now. It's perhaps true that more Protestant than Catholic theologians are producing materials to satisfy this interest. But again, a great many people are reading Teilhard, and he happens to be Catholic.

Brazier: But you've also got to remember that the people who are reading Teilhard and other theologians, Catholic and Protestant, are maybe 15 percent of the Catholic population. That means 85 percent are not doing the reading, yet at the same time remain interested Catholics. I think these people are more interested in

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what some call secular theology. They find greater relevance in helping somebody put up his storm windows than in reading Teilhard.

McHale: Let me speak first of interest in the supernatural: many people my age—25—grew up in a religious, intellectual tradition which purported to establish a vertical relationship between yourself and God. And that meant that one's religious experience was somehow direct, although it was unclear exactly what it was. But there were enough people around who supposedly knew God and loved Him; and if you didn't know Him it bothered you a great deal. There are people my age who have had enormous difficulty dealing with that problem of vertical relationships. They have an attraction to the cultural, imaginative and symbolic traditions of the Church, which are based on vertical relationships; also, there's a kind of obsession, a kind of taste for the Divine, which is very hard to give up. In that sense many people my age *are* still interested in supernatural values.

That same tradition likewise tried to establish religious values which would protect you from social and political corruption, so that if you were holy in the valid sense—you went to Mass; you prayed; you did Catholic Charities' work—you wouldn't be corrupted by the fact that you had a lot of money. I went to school with a lot of girls with a lot of money. I began to discover when I got out that we were being corrupted by the society. I suppose I became a kind of environmentalist and that helped me to change my attitude toward the vertical relationship with God. It also helped me to become very cynical about older religious values.

"We young people are extremely idealistic and we expect this old and very ancient institution, the Church, to be just as idealistic."

As for reading Catholic theologians, I do read them. But I have great difficulty doing so. They are dull. Besides that, there's a language problem. I was asked recently to read some ecumenical documents and I started with one by Pope John. I was so offended that I had to put him down. The language of the Church is really offensive. It's not very direct. There's a restraint even in the most modern theologians, because they are trying to talk to the older Church. This is a restraint which is not easy for me to adjust to. Rage operates much more freely in my mind than a desire to communicate.

Burke: You identify marvelously why Catholic theology is sterile: language. It *is* offensive. Take the papal encyclicals. Even a particularly brilliant, forward-looking encyclical like *Populorum Progressio* makes you irritated. The noble "we" is used so often that it makes the encyclical sound almost arrogant—though the encyclical actually carries an intense compassion for the misery of the human race.

A lot of this language problem goes back to the roots of Catholic theology, which are in Thomism. Why, one teacher I had was hopping up and down with delight because Karl Rahner had "discovered" quasi-formal causality. These people are talking a language that nobody understands and that nobody wants to understand.

Brazier: There is a hypocrisy here and it has existed for centuries. Churchmen speak in noble terms and noble language, but their acts are far from noble. Everybody indicts the Nazis for the slaughter of the Jews. But where was the Pope and where were the Catholic spokesmen then? Indeed, where are the spokesmen, the bishops of America, when it comes to the war in Vietnam? We young people are extremely idealistic and we expect this old and very ancient institution, the Church, to be just as idealistic as we are. Instead it chooses to be "realistic." Naturally young people get frustrated. Some stay with the Church, but many just ignore it and pretend it doesn't exist. Look at Pope Paul. After John he is such a letdown, almost a Hamlet. He seems to see so many sides to every question.

Campion: The problem we're getting at is the deeper one of honesty. Young people who are involved in the contemporary world are very much put off by people who seem to be compromising, who hedge around problems, who do not come to grips with things honestly. This accounts for part of the sterility in a lot of Catholic theology. Many theologians have a valid point to make, but they ensconce it in verbal compromise so that it won't be too offensive to the powers that be. Students are very aware of this tactic; they can spot this kind of phoniness a mile away. It creates an immediate communication barrier.

Editor: Do you think that the younger generation is as honest with itself as it would like the older generation to be honest with itself? For instance, before we started to tape, one of the speakers was talking about wanting to stay out of the draft and to stay out of jail at the same time. Are you facing up to your problems?

Burke: Certainly many of the younger generation are failing to maintain the type of integrity that they demand of others. Look at the amount of cheating that goes on in college. It seems hypocritical to me for persons in this kind of situation to accuse the older generation of dishonesty. They've made themselves dishonest in the context of their own world. It's very easy to accuse someone else of compromise when you're making compromises yourself.

Wilson: Let me interrupt. I'm honest with myself. I know that I'm in college to avoid the draft. And I'm not criticizing the older generation, because I gave up on that generation. No one's going to change it. It's lost, right? . . . And about the papal encyclicals: they're ter-

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rible; they stink; they don't say anything. What I'm waiting for, instead of papal encyclicals, is a new Bob Dylan album. Now there is somebody saying something that pertains to me. He inspires me.

Carling: I think we can get a little perspective by thinking for a minute about which students we are talking. I go to a Catholic college, Fordham. I find—and I suppose this is true of most Catholic and non-Catholic colleges—that a very small percentage of students is active, either socially or religiously or politically. Most students are primarily interested in what they are studying and their careers. Generally, it is the students who read theology, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, who are interested in problems involving the relevance of the religious point of view. So you have students who are primarily interested in careers, and you have students who are interested in the social order and who feel religion has something to say in this area. Now one of the marks of this latter group is that it is hard-pressed for time. Accordingly, it reads the theology that touches most closely on the problems it is working with. This means that these students are reading little Catholic theology. Whatever one may think of Father Rahner and his quasi-formal causality, they don't exactly tell you what you want to know about Vietnam and the civil rights movement.

So it is not so much a matter of turning against Catholicism as such. If Harvey Cox had been a Catholic, his *Secular City* book would have been read. Rather it is the failure of Catholic theologians to discuss the kind of problems that students are most concerned about.

Editor: What violence does disenchantment with Catholic theology and with the system do to belief in the supernatural among young people?

McHale: A kind of violence. Still, there is a logic in what we're saying and the way we're living. (We are very much Americans and therefore some of the things that we say about ourselves as Catholics can be said about young Americans generally.) It seems to me that we begin with the problem of identity. This is a problem quite different for us than it was for our parents, partly because some of the options available to them for identity purposes are meaningless now. For example, making a great deal of money: for those of us raised in an affluent society, this is a pointless identity value. So we seek other means of identity. They call us ahistorical perhaps, and say we're not interested in the magisterium. Really what it is is that we don't know where we start and it ends, and so we prefer not to deal with it at all. Until we come to a much deeper understanding of identity, I think we are always going to be like that.

Carling: One of the problems of our generation is that in some ways it expects too much. We wish that President Johnson would lie less, but at the same time we know a political figure must present his case in the best light possible; and that often borders on duplicity of some kind or another. But in the religious sphere, we expect no equivocating. So when you have Pope Paul saying that the Church is not significantly divided on birth control, or not divided to the point where the issue is in doubt, we get turned off. His is an obvious lie. You see, we expect religious issues not to be treated the same as political issues; we expect the supernatural not to be pleaded the same way a dubious political cause might be. If the man who is the official pronouncer, guardian and proclaimer of the supernatural finds it necessary to lie or to tamper with supernatural truths, it is understandable that students should regard the values they are intended to reflect as irrelevant.

Brazier: I agree that on birth control Pope Paul has proclaimed what seems to us an obvious lie. On the other hand, we young people have to develop a tolerance of the other person's opinion and have got to learn to see the other side of the questions. On birth control, Pope Paul has to remain silent. Think of the thousands of people who have 10, 11, 12, 13 children, because they lived the Catholic faith as it existed four or five years ago. How many of those people would be disillusioned and alienated if the Pope abruptly changed the teaching on birth control? Young people can't become dogmatic, as the Church itself has been for so long. We've got to guard against one-sidedness and one-perspectiveness. We can't just walk in and say "folk Masses are great, abortion is good, there is no just war concept," and be mindless of other people. This is the problem of youth: impatience. I agree with every single one here that the older generation isn't honest; we want more honesty. But we ourselves must have more tolerance and patience.

Burke: I am sick and tired of being told to be patient. The old guard says, "Be patient, be patient; things will change." At the same time we are taught that silence means consent. Well, I don't think we should be expected to be silent on ideals that are spelled out in the Gospels. The Church is our Church; it is not somebody else's Church; it is the whole people of God. And we have clearly founded principles as to what we can expect from the people who are in authority. We have every right, almost a duty, to demand from them that people in authority live up to the principles they are proclaiming. And that means *all* the principles; that means honesty, mercy, justice, charity—not just sexual ethics.

McHale: When you talk about the Church speaking in a forthright way and being honest, you're talking about its taking a critical position with respect to the society. When you do that, and talk at the same time about freedom and involvement and the people of God, you are speaking about a variety of pressures, about conflicts of interest and all those lovely theories in American history courses. Which means that the social institution you're imagining has to have some kind of intimate relationship with the society, and that its critical position is deeply endangered by this intimacy.

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In a way our Church is deeply involved in social society. It's pervaded by American values—values which we've been rejecting. We're trying to establish some kind of critical distance from those values, and do it on a religious basis. At the same time, we can't; for if we get too far away, we have no relevance to the society. It's a problem which has to be worked out systematically and intellectually, as well as in the light of experience. And I don't know anything about how it is to be done.

The problem of patience is the same thing. We're told to be patient; we know we should be. But patience is a liberal value. Fifty-year-old guys like Michael Harrington are really upset because we're not patient. [Harrington was born in 1928.—Ed.] We're saying, "Patience is not the problem, old man; it's your method!" The New Deal is dead, and so is Marxism. We're talking about a qualitative, profoundly different approach to the same old problems. There are plenty of people in the New Left as well as the Church who will say, "I'll work all my life; I'll be very patient; but I want to take it from a different standpoint."

Wilson: I really don't give a damn what the Church has to say. It's speaking to its own line of people, in their own different world. The Church, as far as I'm concerned, is lost. It's on the way out. We started a new world; oh, maybe it's not new but it's different, and we're happy. Leave us alone and we'll leave Church people alone to follow their foolish practices, their superstitions, their Masses. We have a world that has relevance to the way we live. We get up in the morning, we feel good; we go to bed and we feel good. In the Church they go to bed wondering how they feel.

Campion: The issue is deeper than that. Take the liberal movement in the Church the last few years. Much of the liberal vision has become part of the structure, yet a lot of liberals are just as dissatisfied as before. They have not found the fulfillment that they were seeking, even though structures changed. I think we will find that people who today totally reject structures and envision the day that we'll be rid of them won't be satisfied either. To me it is not as much a question of the structures or the externals of the thing, as the attitude involved. I think what young people are searching for is an inner thing, a sense of value that goes way beyond the existing structure. And so getting rid of the structures, or changing structures, or rejecting the Church, or rejecting the government—these really are not avenues to fulfillment.

Carling: There's been a most interesting development with our generation. In the past one's religious life was so wrought up with the religious institution that they were pretty much the same thing. The choice was between the Church and becoming completely secularized, or whatever the current phrase is—or was. In our generation the option has changed dramatically. Students have developed their own kind of religious life outside the institution. This is another way of jumping ship, but it doesn't have the same effect as it used to have. Now the only options aren't "I'll stay a Roman Catholic or I'll be an atheist." Now students are saying, "Well, I've developed a kind of religious life of my own that I find infinitely more valuable and valid than the one I had in the Church. Therefore I don't have to accept the institution. I don't need the Church to give a kind of religious side to my life."

Editor: Is there a faithfulness to certain minimal requirements or is this a total cutting off?

Carling: If by minimal requirements you mean liturgical requirements, then there is not a total cutting off. But because of the freedom that is taken in the liturgy, a lot of what goes on is underground. Yet through it many students who are quite out of the institutional structure of the Church, are able to maintain their sacramental life. This was utterly impossible before.

"We may reject values that institutions now articulate, but actually we haven't rejected the culture. We're products of it."

Editor: I take it for granted that what the Pope has to say, his worries and concerns, don't make the least bit of difference.

Carling: Even on liturgical matters, I don't think anybody any longer cares what the Pope says. Young people especially feel that the Pope doesn't have a right to tell them that they can't have a special kind of liturgy. It's understandable. Priests who participate in new, radical liturgies nearly always say that it's the most stirring liturgical event of their lives. Others say, "It's the first Mass I've ever been to that is really a Mass." These people are not diverted when the Pope says this is all quite dangerous and you must secure permission (which in the New York archdiocese is virtually impossible). People say, "Well, this is a completely fulfilling liturgical experience and you simply do not have the right to tell us that we cannot participate in it. Your religious fiat does not extend that far."

McHale: I live in San Francisco and spend a lot of time among Hippies. I live, I suppose, like a middle-class Hippie. If you identify three kinds of groups—the Hippies, New Leftists with their parallel institutions, and radical Catholics my age who are attempting to develop community, either in houses or unions—you find a great deal in common among all. In a way all have dropped out. All have stopped worrying about how you get the archbishop, or the President, or the mayor, or anybody, to see your point of view. You just act; as the Hippies say, you do your thing. I do not think it's a case simply of saying we are what we are and this is the way we are going to do

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things. It's also that we've been affected by what's been happening in this country. In a way we're exhibiting what you might call withdrawal symptoms, as the result of the effect of the Vietnam war on us; the floundering state of the civil rights movement, and the confusion that now exists among the most advanced student movements. Still we know that we want to be related to other people, that we want to develop community. That's hard but we're beginning to solve real problems along those lines, problems which our institutional friends haven't even begun to imagine. In a sense we're still connected with the institution, but we are withdrawing from the structures—not only because they are totally irrelevant to the problems we see as valid, but also because they seem impervious to change. And we have no power.

Another point: it is true that whatever the Pope says is, especially to New Leftists and to radical Catholics, just a joke. He really doesn't have very much effect on what I think or don't think, except as a kind of visceral reaction. I recall a Wilfrid Sheed article in *Commonweal* about growing up in the '30s. One comment of his really impressed me. It was that he suddenly realized (and other people his age did too) that he was going along thinking, "oh well the Church around me is terrible but that's not the real Church"; then it occurred to him that he had to take responsibility for the Church. I would say that the same is happening to me and, in a peculiar way, to my friends. I feel some very deep need, an obligation, to take responsibility for the Church, for all of its evil, all of its monstrosities, all of its wild, bizarre rococo. It's not only in my blood and in my viscera; it's in my mind. I have to take a responsibility for history, if I'm going to be honest. I can't pretend that I'm different from other Catholics. I am a Catholic. I am also an American.

This brings me back to the problem of dealing with institutions. In a way I think that Hippies, New Leftists and radical Catholics, even if they don't talk about taking responsibility, will sooner or later move out of their withdrawal symptoms and come to terms with the institutions. What they're all interested in is producing change, in, as the Hippies would say, making love. That means making love with everybody. So that means you have to talk to people. It's not so much that you want to make your parents understand and change them. It's that you want to make everybody live decently, honestly, lovingly.

Brazier: I agree to an extent that young people are having withdrawal symptoms, and I say this is a good thing. But so far as the institutional Church is concerned, these people are actually going back to what we had in the beginning—the twelve apostles, and Antioch, and small communities.

But as you say, we are an American people; we're an American Church. We're not an Italian Church, and this is why we're throwing away the Pope. We resent having an Italian sitting over there telling us how to run our Church in America. Not only that, we resent having a bishop of a large city telling us in a small town how we should worship God. We prefer to get together in a community with people of like mind and worship God in the way we feel we should.

Editor: As you withdraw into your small communities, do you see yourselves as part of a universal Church or as isolated communities of Christians?

Brazier: As a universal Church, yes. But not with the hierarchical structure as now, with everything set up and decisions made on certain levels. Each community should have power within itself.

Editor: What is the source of the unity?

Brazier: Faith itself; not institution. The question then is, where does the institutional Church stand in the future Church? Will it go; will it stay? I have reached the conclusion that it has got to go—at least as it exists today. I think just about everybody here agrees on that.

Burke: It is a mistake to say our generation is withdrawing. I agree that there are withdrawal symptoms, but the matter is centripetal as well as centrifugal. I go to bed at night haunted by the misery of what people suffer in South America and India. It's hard to describe the compassion that burns in my heart for these people. I'm haunted, too, by what American society has done to the Negroes, how it has defeated them, squashed them, just completely eroded their self-respect. McLuhan and the electronic technology have cultivated this reaction. We all feel guilty. . . . We feel guilty for what the Church has done, for what American society has done. But we cannot withdraw, because this is the milieu we live in.

Carling: What we are viewing in fact is the evolution of the idea of what an institution is. There are a number of reasons why this had to occur. The most obvious, it seems, is the breakdown of the parish structure. Parishes are geographical. Those of us in urban environments do not live in geographical units any longer; our primary community is no longer our neighborhood. Those of us on campuses lose all ties with the parish by being away from it for four years. We develop a new kind of community, a community of interest and not of location; a community with its own liturgy, its own priests and, more often than not, its own set of doctrines. Now this movement, which can never be turned back, has led to the realization, first, that the institutional Church is not the same thing as the hierarchy. People in this movement might have left the Church 20 years ago, or remained in it, frustrated; now they feel themselves very much a part of the Church but not as members of a parish of a particular archdiocese. A group like this pretty much removes itself from chancery and diocese. But still not completely. It was such a group that picketed the New York chancery last year after it made a defensive gesture and sent a priest away (we feel, at least, it had a large part in sending the priest away), and told two others to shut up and to stop associating with particular students. We took to the streets, caused a lot of trouble, and embarrassed the

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chancery. The point is obvious; we cannot entirely break our connectiion with the hierarchy since the hierarchy, in fact, still holds the power.

Now many of the problems we are talking about—the papacy credibility gap and that sort of thing—are connected with the spread of these communities, because these communities have their own kind of rules; they are self-sustaining; generally they're academic, and therefore very sure of themselves and of the kind of beliefs they are evolving. They resent very much the intrusion of anyone from the outside, and especially from above, telling them what to believe, or how to worship, or where to be and when.

But we have to watch very closely where this movement is going. There are dangers in it. The most obvious is that these groups tend to turn in upon themselves. We talk a lot about this. It's not so much a matter of alienation in the classic sense; it's a matter of being so self-sufficient, so self-sustaining that it's hard to be part of the institution at large any more. The problem then is, what kind of unity do you maintain? I don't know. I see every day groups I associate with getting farther and farther away from the institution, and people in them rejecting the idea of real membership in the institution. The Church is a funny kind of club anyway. It doesn't have any membership card or membership lists; there are no dues. And this is probably the thing. You wonder after a while what it means to be a member, to be a Catholic. In the last six months I have practically rejected the idea. When anybody asks me if I'm a Catholic, I don't know how to answer. I'm not sure it's a relevant question. Am I or am I not a Catholic? I'm not even certain it's an either-or proposition.

"When Pope Paul says the Church is not divided on birth control to the point where the issue is in doubt, we get turned off. His is a lie."

Thus we begin to inhabit a kind of twilight zone between the world and the Church. This is good, I think, and necessary. But at the same time we find ourselves becoming inverted, quite rigid in some ways and dogmatic in others; we're very much too sure of ourselves. Still the movement as a whole is only not good but necessary, because the alternative for so many of us who cannot function within the structure as it exists would be to leave it altogether.

Wilson: I'd like to make an observation about the Church. When you read the Gospel concept of Jesus Christ, he seems to be, pardon the expression, hip, cool, with it. Right? But the Church today is so different from what Christ had in mind; it just doesn't jive. Someone said youth groups resemble the early Church. That's a good observation. We're starting all over again. Christ would have fit right in at a pot party.

Brazier: What you're saying is that Christ was a man of his time, which I don't think anybody will deny.

Editor: Where does the motivation come from for social, political and interpersonal good if you diminish the institution and the papacy? You don't look to the state. Where do you look? Back to the Gospels? To Christ? Or to a secular humanism?

Carling: One reason a dichotomy grew between our social and religious consciousness *vis à vis* the institution was the discovery—whether from being brought up in the slums, as I was, or through other means—that our social consciousness didn't come from the institution. Consequently there seemed little point in reading encyclicals or pronouncements to try to find there justification or motivation for what we already felt most deeply.

I think that social consciousness can be heightened by reading the Gospel, and ought to be; ideally, it should be seen in the context not only of the Gospel and Christianity, but of our whole religious tradition. However, having developed itself independently, I don't think that social consciousness will ever be seen merely as a part of our religious tradition, our Catholicity, our Christianity, or anything else. It is essentially part of ourselves as persons and as humans.

The fact that truths we hold most dear have evolved this way inevitably influences our idea of what real truths are and where they ought to be found. We have a tendency to seek religious and other kinds of truths in the same way we found social consciousness. Hence, we look to the Church less and less for any kind of inspiration.

Editor: Where specifically do you find this inspiration or the motivation?

Carling: Right out on the streets.

McHale: There are people I have read that I could point to and say "I've gotten a lot of my values from them; they articulate my needs." But it still remains true that the reason I go to these people, and the reason all of us go to the streets, is that they offer something that we already feel, something that we need. We are just looking for new sources. But in a way what produced our needs is simply the logic of history. That may be impossible to discuss but there are certain facts. History develops. There is a kind of evolution and it produces changes in consciousness, if not in love, as McLuhan points out so horribly. There is a kind of change in epistemology taking place, simply because we're alive and we live in the culture. We may reject values that institutions now articulate, but actually we haven't rejected the culture. We're products of it. We're just trying to find more relevant and, I hate this word, meaningful ways of expressing needs that history has produced in us.

This leads to a point on the question of liturgy. It's not so much liturgy, it's a style of life that we're looking for.

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Michael Novak once talked about the difference between the Christian and the atheist being one of symbolic content. Others talk that way, too. If you take that to be your language for the moment, and say it is symbolic content which makes me different from the atheist or which makes me what I am, then you have to find rituals and language and styles which are symbolic and which express your content, so to speak. They have to be related to the society. You look at this country and you think what have I got in common with it; America, I don't know you or like you. So you go off with your own friends and you stumble around and try to find rituals and language and symbols which you have in common.

Editor: Many of my generation came out of the radical Catholic movements. We denied that the older people represented the real Church, because we recognized the Church in something like the Catholic Worker. We were intent on changing the Church, insisting that the Catholic Worker represented the *real* Church. Do you see yourselves as working to change the conception of the Church or are you just sort of "out"?

Carling: The fact is that increasingly the most articulate young Catholics are Catholics who have gone through our type of experience. Within a period of generations this has simply got to change the Church, even if we can't tell exactly how. I think, on the other hand, we should be less dogmatic about wanting to change the Church consciously. The institution has its rules; it functions on the kind of principles that it considers relevant and that's perfectly fine. But I have ceased worrying about trying to convert Cardinal Spellman to my point of view. I simply would rather that he didn't try to stop me from living my own way or take the priests away from me who are trying to help me live that way.

Campion: I think our motivation and inspiration come from person, in the deepest sense of that word. Young people today are so much more aware of the ultimate value of person.

Burke: With regard to motivation, we respond as we do socially because of the way we have been trained within Catholicism. We see the Church as being a miserable flop. But nevertheless it is the Church that gave us birth, that created us, that had us read the Gospel, that made us sensitive and responsive to particular types of values. At the same time, ours is an electronic milieu. The viewer sees; he reacts. He rages at Cardinal Spellman or other members in the Church who don't respond to values they have supposedly committed themselves to. Then occurs the process of alienation by which the person moves outside the institution.

McHale: The same thing is happening to people who have not been raised in religious institutions. Mario Savio, in an article just after the free speech movement was more or less dead, said something which expresses a very interesting quality among young people who are not religiously affected. He said it should be enough just to point to an evil. It's there and it's wrong. Mario Savio took quite literally all the baloney about democracy that we were taught in civics class. For some peculiar reason, we tend to take our culture quite literally.

Burke: But why does Savio or anyone else even talk about evil? He talks about evil because of the process of Christofication that has occurred over 20 centuries. I think that we have so absorbed the Christian evangelical morality into our sensibilities, into our way of perceiving the world, that we even talk in those terms, whether specifically we have been religiously trained or not. I think this is one of the reasons why things like compassion and being in love really mean so much to us.

McHale: I disagree with you. What you're engaging in is an act of appropriation. Michael Novak does the same damn thing. It's an act of appropriation to say Christianity has given all these values to Western civilization. That's really not true.

Carling: It's very interesting that our Jesuit friend here is one who has made the most harsh pronouncements about the Church. He's the only one who's come out and said the Church has flopped, that its approach sometimes makes him nauseous. This is illustrative of the greatest single failure of the Church: so many of us don't care any more. We lose less and less sleep about the distance between the hierarchical Church and the real world. We have so little time, we want to spend it working in the real world and just don't worry about the Church. It is those men who are committed professionally to the Church, as I presume a Jesuit seminarian would be, who have to live day after day with this distance in a way we're all lucky enough not to have to. The fact that the Church fails to inspire rage in us is more indicative than anything else of the extent to which it has failed to touch our generation.

Campion: I agree. Students now are not much concerned with trying to reconcile the historical Church with their view of reality. They're much more concerned with living valid lives, and being in the world in as personal and as efficacious a way as possible. When more people begin to live valid lives themselves as individuals, perhaps with person as ultimate value, then the structures will begin to express themselves validly.

McHale: Maybe because I'm a few years older I differ on this point. But still it's not just me, or I wouldn't bother to say it. There are other people my age who feel the same. What it amounts to is this. We are, as you say, trying to live decent, valid lives and trying to figure out how to relate to this society. We simply don't worry what the Church has to offer in the way of guidelines and morals. It has failed. In that sense we are like you.

But in another sense none of us is capable of really being indifferent. In other words, I still get enraged, and so do many of my friends who are at least as radical as I am. They don't much bother about what you should do about archbishops. They debate it theoretically; it is a technical problem. But it's also a visceral problem. I

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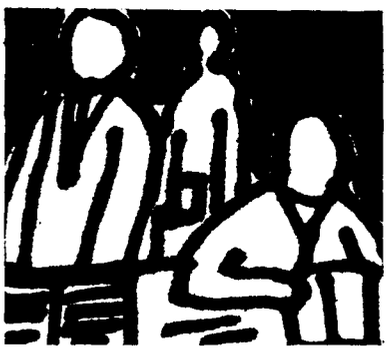
can't justify my relationship with the Church on intellectual grounds. I mean it. I'm stuck with it and so are others my age. We're in it and it's in our blood. There's no way out. When Archbishop McGucken says something absolutely asinine, my stomach gets all upset. I can't ignore him, even though the man has never said anything that I could possibly consider worthwhile.

Campion: What I meant is that on a theoretical, intellectual level, I don't think people are concerned anymore about trying to reconcile the Church. On an existential-experiential level, it's quite a different thing. The Church



does cause rage; it does cause frustration. We realize that we're a part of it, and that it's part of our cultural heritage.

Carling: I think it's the other way around. I have great intellectual interest in the Church. What convinces me more every day that the Church is failing is that I can no longer react viscerally to the Church. That's more frightening, because the intellectual interest will always be there—though it may not be very compelling.

Wilson: This feeling that you are stuck with the Church . . . if you don't like the Church you should get out. The way I did; the way my friends did. As far as we're concerned, God may or not be dead, but the Church is certainly long gone. The services have already been held.

Brazier: No, you can't get out. If you don't believe in Christ, okay, get out of the Catholic Church, get out of Christianity. If you don't believe in democracy, get out of America. But because you deny the right of the Catholic Church as an institution to dictate your acts, you should not just drop out. I don't altogether believe that you should work within its confines. Perhaps ignore some of the more stringent rules, if you feel you can't work with them. But you've got to work within the establishment that you've got, and try and take it to an end, to some goal. You don't throw it away. You become a nihilist if you throw it away.

Burke: You people have not explained why you care.

McHale: I care because I was born Kathy McHale, an Irish-Catholic.

Burke: That's my point about Teilhard and Christofication. I'm talking about an evolution that has occurred within the human race in terms of revelation, in terms of a theology—and I don't mean Rahnerian theology. We *do* care about living decent valid lives and the fact that we care is what is significant. It is indicative of the extent to which we have absorbed the Gospels or the data of revelation. It is a reason why you have to make a careful distinction between the Church as church and the Church as institution. I think we are perhaps past the point of the Church as an institution, at least as we know it today. But that doesn't mean we are beyond the Church in the sense of revelation.

Carling: I hardly think that we absorb our idea of valid living from the Gospel or any other source. It's there. It hits you every time you look at it. The validity of life leaps out at you.

Burke: Then why not just go out, get a job, earn money, have a nice life, get yourself a couple of swimming pools and things like that? Why do we care about something in life more than that?

Carling: The reason we care more is because we have found that life is not just that. I don't deny that our tradition, our upbringing and all the rest have a profound effect on this type of consciousness. I don't know whether I could have developed a sensitivity of this sort had I not been raised the way I was and even been exposed to the Christian Catholic tradition. At the same time I'm convinced that the sensitivity itself and the kind of consciousness it produces in me are not a result in any sense of that upbringing. They're a result of my contact, always a surprising one, with life itself. When you undergo such a process you automatically think back to your tradition. Our minds are continually correlating what we are doing with what we have read and learned. I'm certain that there are two distinct sources here. The source of my basic sensitivity is experience itself and any kind of correlation I make between that and my tradition is something I do after the fact.

Burke: I think you're denying experience of the psyche. This is learning psychology in general.

McHale: I would only subscribe to what you are saying if you were willing to admit that theology follows sociology. I have been wanting to know for a long time how many Catholics or ex-Catholics there are in the New Left. I asked a friend of mine who knows a great many New Leftists and she said half. I can't get any figures, but if I ever do! There is a connection. It may be religious, but if theology is what is making us care, it's because theology is coming to terms with society, with cultural facts, cultural traditions—which theology hasn't been doing since the nineteenth century. That's what I mean when I say theology follows sociology.

Burke: When I use the word theology, though, I'm not talking about academic theology. I'm talking about a theological event that occurred in history. I don't want to associate myself with Rahner, Küng or any of those people whatsoever. I don't think they have done anything.

McHale: I would carry it farther. I would say that

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I'm not sure what Christ did either. That's what I'm saying.

Editor: Most of you seem to go or have gone to Catholic colleges. Are you glad or sorry?

McHale: I went to a Catholic college and in the four years since I have spent an undue amount of time examining that education, on the assumption that if I didn't find out what it did to me, I wouldn't know who I was. I developed a lot of very abstract theories, most of which were violently antagonistic about the system, which is one of the most subtle, the most Machiavellian that anyone could be exposed to. I went back to that college recently. I found that what I take to be the epistemology changes in America and the world are going on even there. One can't say I hated my Catholic education, although I would prefer to have gone elsewhere. All I can say is that I am what I am and that the Catholic Church and the Irish tradition have made me that way. And so has America. So has Camus. I would never pay a dime if I were rich to a Catholic school, to create one, but I would support a place where people are studying religious traditions and talking about religious matters, and thinking about God and Christ. I'm not willing to say there should be no religious academic institutions. I believe in academic professionalism, to some degree. That means scholars working on theology. That means someone paying them, too. But I would never support a Catholic school, especially one that had nothing but girls. And nothing but girls from an upper economic income, being taught by nothing but women, and sorry, sorry academic has-beens, and a few intellectuals. I'm not attacking the entire faculty of any Catholic college. Catholic schools have a lot of really brilliant intellectuals. But the whole idea of a Catholic college is really bad; it can't work.

Campion: I think that most of us who have run the gamut of Catholic education are more sorry about the provincialism inherent in the system than we are with Christian attitudes it seeks to communicate. There's such a lack of integration with the whole of reality.

Brazier: I have never gone to an institution—they've all been Catholic by the way—of which I can honestly say I'm proud. I've always had a feeling of shame, a need to apologize. This is my fault as well as the institutions'. I shouldn't feel as though I have to apologize. At the same time, however, my classmates have felt the same way. Catholic schools have a reputation of being provincial, of being one-minded, of being dogmatic.

Carling: Fordham is different from any other Catholic college, so it's hard for me to generalize. It has its weaknesses; but not in terms of its Catholicity. That is a great compliment that I can pay Fordham. I think of Fordham as an educational institution and the criticisms that automatically crop up in my mind are educational criticisms. There are certain weaknesses that are directly attributable to the school's religious orientation; for example, weaknesses in the philosophy department. But other weaknesses have been erased so quickly that three years from now, I probably wouldn't be able to make that criticism at all. So while I think that Fordham has weaknesses, many of which derive from its history as a Catholic institution, its weaknesses today are not attributable to its Catholicity. I'm not altogether pleased about the education I received there, but I certainly can't condemn it as a ghetto or Catholic enclave. The religious influence at Fordham—and this may shock some people—is nil. You can go through four years there and have one, two, three priests as teachers, perhaps none. You can also have 20. Generally you have only one or two. There are no religious requirements at all, except that Catholic students take theology. There are no compulsory religious services. You go for months at a time and never see a priest, and never hear God mentioned. From the point of view of some people that may be bad. I thought it was terrific. I had the freedom to look for what I wanted to find and to avoid what I wished to avoid.

Wilson: Two good points have been overlooked about going to a Catholic institution. The first is that if you're the type that looks to revolt against stuffed shirts, Catholic institutions give you an excellent opportunity because there are so many of them there. Good point two: most of the students I know at the Catholic college I have been attending have lost their faith.

Brazier: Catholic education on the whole has failed. The schools are inferior to secular institutions. They cannot attract the faculty, and they have neither the money nor the facilities to compete educationally with secular institutions. They do not even fulfill the goal of keeping people in the faith or converting people to Catholicism.

Burke: When I graduated from high school I was in a position to go to just about any college or university that I wanted. I was offered a scholarship to Harvard and I refused; I said I would go to a Catholic school and no other. I have changed my opinion considerably since that moment of my life. Why? This is a complicated question and distinctions have to be made.

There is what I call Chinese brainwashing at its best that occurs in the Catholic school system, and I resent that bitterly. On the other hand, I am grateful to Catholic education, because with it I have developed a sensibility, a type of perception which involves compassion and sensitivity (I have the uncomfortable feeling at times, however, that I developed this in spite of what I had been through).

Over-all, though, I feel shortchanged—for several reasons. I have come as an older and wiser person to realize that most of our Catholic schools on the university level are third-rate at best, and to recognize that dialogue and communication are severely hampered between the intellectual who is a product of the Catholic school system and American society as a whole. I also feel shortchanged that I could never really develop myself as a person. At Holy Cross, my college, I associated only with Catholics,

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and Catholics of a certain type—what *Time* very wittily termed "wall to wall Irish." I never had any significant dealings with people who are Jewish, who are Negro, who are Protestant, who are atheists. I feel deprived as a person because of this.

I feel shortchanged, finally, because of the quality of the education I have received. You can graduate from a Catholic college at the top of your class, yet the very best schools in a secular society—Stanford, Harvard, Yale, the University of Chicago—will still be very reluctant to accept you for graduate work.

Editor: There has been much talk about changes going on in Catholic education, and all of you are from schools that are often cited as places where exciting things are happening. Is yours a reflection of the true situation? Does the brainwashing still go on despite all the changes?

Campion: Of late, Catholic institutions have felt compelled to offer at least some part of the other side of questions. My big complaint is that, although they do this, they don't take the questions seriously. Not until they do will they really begin to open up intellectually.

Editor: Is there a complacency on the Catholic college campus? How representative are your misgivings of those of students generally?

Burke: Representative of the articulate few. Communications media create the illusion that the Left—the draft card burners, the Hippies and all those people—are taking over. But the facts are different. There are fewer people, for instance, dodging the draft today than there were ten years ago. Many people on the college level are preoccupied with the same questions the generation of the '50s was—the generation that was accused of being the apathetic, of being concerned with security, nothing else. That type person is still around. There is a significant vocal minority, but it's not everyone nor everywhere.

"The fact that the Church fails to inspire rage in us is indicative of the extent to which it has failed to touch our generation."

Carling: Also, there is a difference between the level of activism at Catholic universities and secular universities. At a place like Fordham there are perhaps two percent who are active; at Columbia, there may be eight percent. The point is that the vast majority of college students in this country at whatever institution you name (with a few exceptions like Antioch and Berkeley) are primarily concerned with the life they're going to lead, the professions they're going to enter, the money they're going to make. I don't want to disparage that too much; at least those students are spared a lot of the anguish that some of us undergo occasionally.

McHale: It is inaccurate to make a strict dichotomy between activists and the apathetic types because of the change of epistemology going on in this country. A lot of young people who are not activists, who are still apathetic, are interested more and more in finding out who they are, and that's the beginning.

When I gave my talk on the New Left at the college I attended, the students didn't ask questions, so I directed questions at them. I said, "What do you think of Newton?" One of them, very sweetly, just like a good Catholic girl, said, "I am very grateful to Newton; it's a wonderful testing place for frustration. I'm grateful to Newton for teaching me how to overcome disappointment in all the people I thought I was going to admire."

There are lots of people like her, who are really Americans more than they are Catholics. They talk to the dean and say they want to read more; that they don't want to go to lecture classes. Well, that happens in Berkeley. The students are changing and the institutions have to change. I would never say that the Catholic schools are going through any kind of logical evolutionary process. But, because they have students who are American as well as Catholic, they have no choice but to change. I don't know whether I'm interested any more in whether they do change. Education has a lot more pressing problems than whether Catholic schools should or should not exist.

Editor: I notice a great emphasis on the note American. What America do you identify with? Do you identify with majority America, minority America? Is it Johnson's America, or Humphrey's? Whose?

McHale: I'm an American who's 25, and that means there's a lot of Johnson in me. There's a lot in me which is attracted to practical politics, to compromise, to making a new deal with the system, to cooperating. There's a lot of me which is electronic. I can't learn in linear fashion anymore. What I learn is much more cobwebby than neat little lines. Part of that is happening to everyone—except maybe Johnson. It's happening to people my age, Catholic or whatever. I also identify with Americans who are Irish-Catholics, but American Irish-Catholic.

Editor: What I'm asking is, are you as discontented in any comparable way with America as you are with the Church?

McHale: Yes, we're disgusted with this country—it's sick, it's wild, it's surreal. It's not just the Church; the whole country is mad.

Editor: Are there radicals of the right on the campuses you're in touch with?

Wilson: Most definitely; for instance, our ROTC people. They had an exhibit in which they claimed that a certain piece of artillery was famous for the fact that it killed more people in war than any other machine. They were really proud of the fact. And this is at a Catholic college! I can't understand it. It certainly doesn't jibe with what you'd expect to be Christian interests. And

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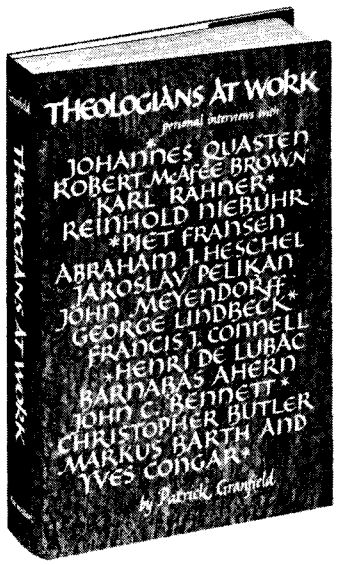

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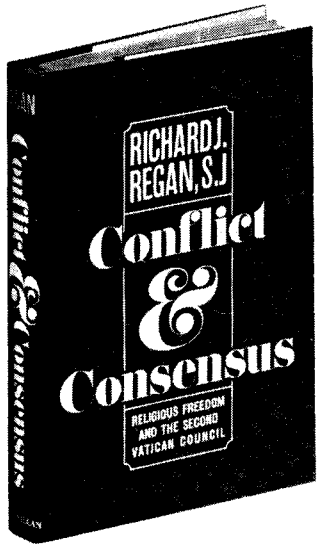

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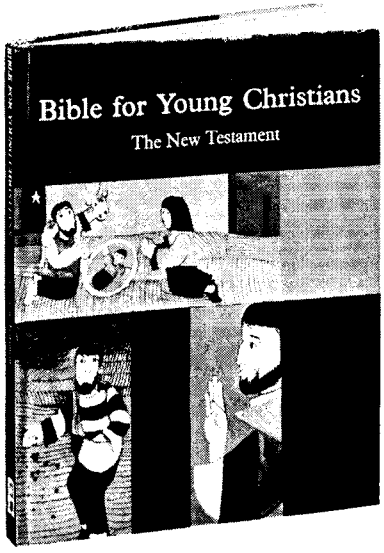

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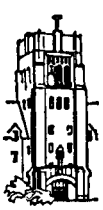

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there are conservatives, and young Bill Buckleys and young Barry Goldwaters around. They're not all locked up.

Carling: Nor should they be.

Editor: How about student discontent with the war in Vietnam? Does it spring from a genuine idealism or moral view, or is it that the students just want to get on with their jobs and their careers and don't want to be disturbed?

Carling: There are some of the latter, certainly. There are any number of people who oppose the war in Vietnam because they don't want to go there. But it would be a mistake to attribute the mass of student dissent to that factor. Many students are pragmatic politically. They're the kind of Schlesinger liberal, who say I'm anti-Communist; or the Kennan liberal, who say Communism must be stopped, but this is not the right way to do it. While their discontent is very narrow, it is expanding—as it has to. Where this discontent is going to lead, I'm not quite sure. But it is going to go somewhere. This professionally-oriented, measuredly liberal student group is going to grow very rapidly.

> ***"We're disgusted with this country. It's sick, it's wild, it's surreal. It's not just the Church; the whole country is mad."***

McHale: Something has happened to us in the process of being against the war. In the beginning I used to think that people who yelled about Vietnam peasants and babies being murdered were hysterical, but now that killing haunts my imagination. Somebody said to me, "Well, the moral rationale for killing those people has collapsed." That may be true, but I think there is another explanation. It is that I'm learning by what you might call total experience. All of us are more and more affected by our imaginations. We go to dances where there are light shows and sounds; we become absorbed in them. We don't think in distinctions anymore. The Vietnam war becomes an imaginative experience. It's true we've never been there; it's true we are idealistic. But we can imagine much better than our parents can, because of the way we're learning these days. That has to do with what McLuhan talks about.

Burke: I have interpreted the bulk of the dissent against the war, especially the type of dissent practiced by Martin Luther King, as inspired by moral, religious values. I am wholeheartedly in favor of this type of dissent. I think that killing in war is wrong, and the killing in Vietnam gives me nightmares. On the other hand, I haven't been convinced yet about the reality of American aggression there. I haven't seen anything that would con-

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vince me that the policies that Johnson is following are wrong in terms of the reality of the situation. I know they're wrong from an ideal point of view. There's no question in my mind about that. The war is horrible. If you have one grain of compassion in you, you can't sit down in front of your television set watching those marines and those planes bombing and shooting and killing people without becoming terribly upset. I think it's the television that feeds the dissent.

I judge my government in terms of how well it is fulfilling its obligations in terms of our Constitution. I don't think it's doing a terribly bad job; in many respects I think Johnson is a very brilliant President. Some of the things he has done on civil rights are fantastic. On the international question—you know, is this the way to fight Communism or not?—this is more complex and subtle and I don't know what to think.

Brazier: It seems to me you're saying the Sermon on the Mount is a good and efficacious code but when you bring it down to earth it doesn't apply.

Burke: I can't judge President Johnson and the people who are dealing with the realities of a small country in Southeast Asia. I hear stories about the kind of things the Viet Cong do. I know that over a million people fled North Vietnam when Ho Chi Minh took over. These are realities that those who are arguing against war don't take account of. Their clever selectivity of facts upsets me. In any case I don't feel competent to judge in that area. But when it comes to the Constitution and government in our society, to civil rights and equal opportunities for Negroes, then things are clear to me and I will judge my President and my Congress in those terms.

When I'm dealing in the Church, I develop my criteria from a completely different angle and am more ruthless in pursuing those criteria. But I can't say to President Johnson you're committed to the Sermon on the Mount, therefore you can't do this.

Campion: Don't you think you're making an artificial distinction? I don't find it quite so easy to differentiate between the Church and society, between Christian and political values. The two overlap and I can't maintain a double standard of morality and judge on two different levels.

Burke: I see what you mean. I'm just incapable of articulating it any better than I did.

McHale: I don't think there's much point in arguing with you now about whether or not the war in Vietnam is right, but you express very vividly what a lot of us have already gone through—in precisely the same kind of language and with precisely the same distinctions. At the risk of offending you, I would be willing to bet that in two years you'll change. And I don't mean that to be arrogant. I really don't. I'm saying that the logic of your thought processes will continue along the same lines and you will begin to find it more and more difficult to draw your political-religious distinctions.

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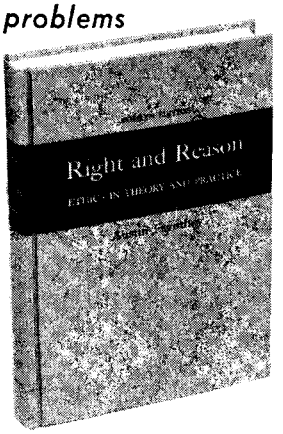

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GAMES MOVIES PLAY

THE SCREEN

In a recent TV interview, director Joseph L. Mankiewicz said he had little patience with directors who purposely made their films obscure. He suspects them of not being sure of what they want to say. Since Mankiewicz didn't name any directors or movies that he had in mind, I hope he was not including Antonioni and Bergman; but he might very well have specified some of the brand new films now on our screens, especially "Point Blank."

Cinematically, "Point Blank" is quite interesting, with stunning color photography of San Francisco and Los Angeles and some fascinating interiors: an elaborate apartment building, a wild psychedelic nightclub, and the former federal penitentiary, Alcatraz. "Point Blank" also uses sound well: a good musical score, and over-recording effect that only the cinema medium can take advantage of. But in telling the story of a crook bent on getting revenge on his partner-in-crime who stole not only the loot but also the crook's wife, director John Boorman gets so carried away with tricky camera shots and flashbacks (that are really quick remembrance-by-association flashes) that his film becomes consciously arty as well as confusing.

Director Boorman and his scriptwriters forget to tell us how and where certain key things happen—how, for instance, Lee Marvin, as the lead crook, teams up with Keenan Wynn who is anxious to dispose of various men, perhaps even Lee's ex-partner, in The Organization. What director Boorman does not forget to do, however, is show the violent and dirty methods which Lee uses. "Point Blank" has fisticuffs and killings galore, so many in fact that one wonders if it is aimed, with its arty and elliptic film making, at the highbrow crowd, or, with its heavy doses of brutality, at the lowbrows. The acting, what there is of it in between fights, is good, especially by Marvin, Angie Dickinson as his sister-in-law who's used as sex bait, Lloyd Bochner and Carroll O'Connor as cold-blooded scheming members of The Organization. No doubt "Point Blank" is trying to say that pursuit of money and vengeance is a pretty poor reason for being, but since all the characters are such low-life, few in the audience are likely to project themselves into the picture. As far as I'm concerned "Point Blank" draws a blank.

I'm not quite sure what "The Penthouse" is getting at either, unless this sick exercise in shock and terror is meant to do nothing more than scare the pants off the audience. Scare and shock it does as it tells its story of two people who are staying in the penthouse of an otherwise unoccupied, new apartment building: the man (Ter-

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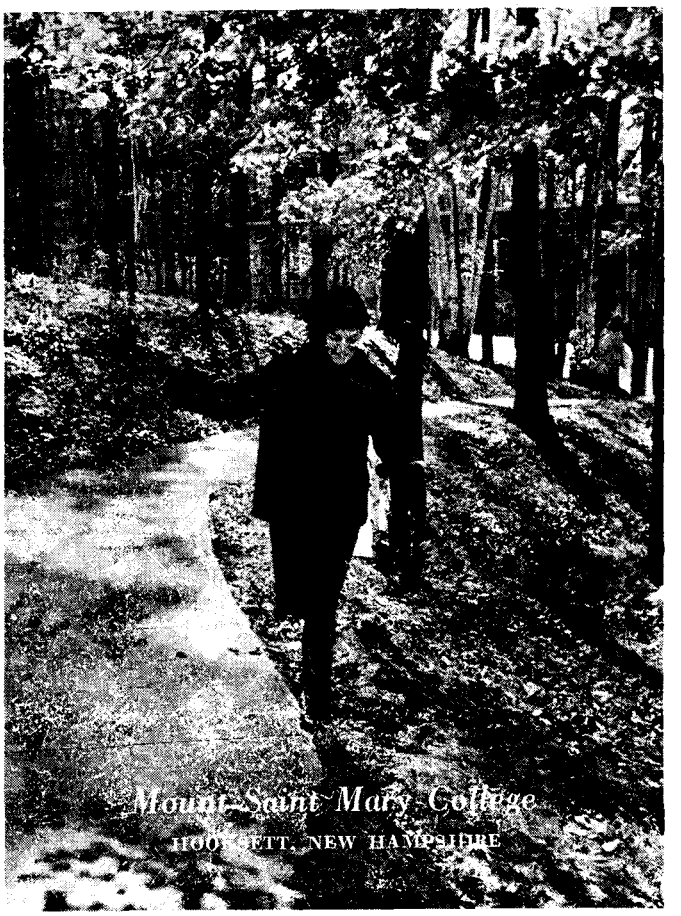
ence Morgan) is married and the father of two; the woman (Suzy Kendall) hopes he will get a divorce. Into this love nest come two young men, posing at first as meter readers and then soon exposing that they are psychopaths interested in robbery and staging a party—not with the man of the house whom they tie in a chair with strong ribbon, but with the terrified girl whom they ply with enough Scotch to relax her for their machinations.

What happens gets wilder and wilder and more obscene as the hours pass and the girl joins the party spirit and has a turn in the bedroom with each of the boys. Although Peter Collinson, who wrote the script and directed, handles his cast well, one begins to suspect his interest is more in sensationalism, particularly in the graphic scenes, than in making a point about human frailty. The two boys are never explained—except in the inferences in the lengthy monologue by Tony Beckley, as the brighter of the two, about the alligators in the sewers who start out as cute pets and become menacing monsters. The other fellow is played by Norman Rodway as an ape type; and the two are as sinister a pair as you'd ever want to see—or not see. Besides being far too long and hard to take, "The Penthouse" has a series of climaxes, each one of which leaves you crying "Enough!" I suppose, when the original couple are left completely degraded and disgusted with each other at the finale, that the film is meant to be a warning against the immorality of society today. But "The Penthouse" is no "La Dolce Vita," and leaves one more nauseated than concerned with a message.

In contrast to the other two movies, "Games" is like an old-fashioned chiller-thriller, somewhat like "Angel Street" (sometimes called "Gaslight"). Its setting, however, is strictly today. The young married couple live in an attractive old New York house, but their decorations are the last word in mod; and their game room is wacky as well as mod. Their games are too—with grim and gloomy references to death and scarey Op and Pop stuff.

"Games" is a difficult movie to review because one can't tell too much. But this much you can know: to the house of this couple (James Caan and Katharine Ross) in the third year of their marriage comes a middle-aged woman (Simone Signoret) who is selling cosmetics. When she faints during the course of the sale, the young wife puts her to bed and calls a doctor. And as the days go by, the woman stays and stays and stays. Don't be disturbed if you guess the solutions early in the game. That won't spoil the chills or thrills, and director Curtis Harrington, who wrote the original story, knows how to hold your interest with the suspenseful and crazy goings-on. The cast is good throughout; the house is entertaining; and so, in their way, are all the diabolic shenanigans. Watch out, however, for that life-size plaster-of-Paris statue made in the manner of George Segal's art. I always wondered what it was good for. PHILIP T. HARTUNG



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JOHN RATTE

"People tremble before liberalism: well, Catholicize it and Society will be reborn." So wrote Félicité de Lamennais: but no one took his advice. Except in Belgium, the Catholic liberal movement of the nineteenth century failed. So did the liberal Catholic movement as well. The Catholic who was a liberal in politics opposed monarchy (though he did not necessarily embrace the revolution) and believed that only a state with a constitution and a parliament and a free Church could encourage real freedom and true religion. The Catholic who was a liberal in religion believed that the Church could and should accommodate itself to modern society; that science and pope could be reconciled (*real* science, from the laboratory and the library, not systematic Thomism *à la* Suarez or even straight); and that the excesses of curialism and ultramontanism needed to be reformed. Often he believed that the liberalization of Catholicism was the pre-requisite for the Catholicizing of liberalism.

These matters are confusing because they were in fact confused. And yet historians seem to agree that we must not mistake the Catholic liberal, who could be very conservative in matters doctrinal and administrative, for the liberal Catholic, who might have no interest whatsoever in politics or the "social question," as the Victorians so discreetly dubbed the horrors attendant upon industrialism and urbanization.

Most thoroughly imbedded in the misconception created by historical generalization about nineteenth century Europe is the life and thought of Lamennais. Historical *Sitzfleish* and, in the case of Peter Stearns' book, a talent for clear exposition and fluid narrative, do much to rescue him. Lamennais deserves to be studied and read, and the excellent selections of texts in translation in *Priest and Revolutionary* will encourage contact with one of the finest writers and most speculative minds of the age. But the problems of interpreting his life and thought are not the results of scholarship, or the lack of it. They inhere in the subject. Like all great men Lamennais was both dynamic and inconsistent. He changed his *position* often but never changed his *mind*, once he had shaped the fundamentals of his philosophical system. Man and society, not God and church, were at the heart of his thought and his action.

A reluctant believer, who made his first communion at 22, Lamennais at his most "orthodox" was a singular priest, never involved in parish life, never ambitious in the traditional ways. Ugly, neurasthenic, authoritarian, intolerant of criticism and contradiction, charismatic in his influence on his followers (after the break, Lacordaire could never understand why he had believed as did the Master), he sat indoors and scribbled. Probably, he changed history, like that industrious denizen of the British Museum, Karl Marx. If at the end of his life he was alone, broken, ignored, both as a symbol and as a seminal thinker, he had had a wide and permanent influence, even in circles far removed from religion, as W. G. Roe shows in his exhaustive examination of interpretations and misinterpretations of his personality and his ideas in England from the 1820's to the modernist crisis.

Lamennais began as an ultramontane and ended an agnostic socialist of sorts. There were many points between. Alec Vidler, in an earlier study of Lamennais, summed them up: "He was a royalist, and then a republican; he was an authoritarian, and then a libertarian; he was an establishmentarian, and then a disestablishmentarian; he was a champion of clericalism, and then a herald of lay catholic action." What remained constant as Lamennais moved from position to position was his conviction that God had given the general reason (*sensus communis, sens commun, raison générale*) of mankind authority to shape human life, and a vision by which action could be judged. This vision came from God to mankind in a fundamental revelation at the beginning of creation. As Professor Stearns puts it, "although they would lead to the Church, the basic truths had been present in the human race long before the creation of the Church." This notion was fundamental to the work which made Lamennais' reputation, the famous *Essai sur l'Indifférence en matière de religion*. The argument was not particularly orthodox, but it was part of a defense of orthodoxy in the face of Enlightened rationalism, and if it was not praised, it was not condemned.

At the beginning, then, Lamennais' theme was "without religion, no society." Political authority he denied outright: by themselves neither kings nor parliaments could triumph over social forces. Initially, Lamennais found revolution and toleration and liberalism means to the end of order in society. His genius soon realized that the Revolution was scarcely begun. When he discovered that the Pope would not take up the burden of responsibility for the modern world, he was not destroyed. Stearns makes it clear that Lamennais did not go to Rome with the dreams and hopes which romantic (and frustrated liberal Catholic) historical popularization have attributed to him. For his hope had always been in man, not in any particular institution.

Yet was there not an alteration here, in the great crisis of the 1830's, when the *Avenir* was condemned and Lamennais

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left the Church? If at the end Lamennais said, "without society, no religion," must we not see the break with the Church as a far different matter than his break with the monarchy? Only if one persists in seeing Lamennais as a paragon of orthodoxy who then (a) had the misfortune to fall from grace, or (b) had the good fortune to see through the impossibility of the project he had created for the Catholic Church. Stearns offers a better vantage point for judgment by presenting the reluctant abbé in the thick context of the struggle of French Catholicism to find a role in the revolutionary age. Lamennais failed on the left: the Church failed, one fears, on the right. Stearns concludes: "The creative part of his life was devoted to fighting the trends, though he did not know it. The movements with which he tried to deal were hostile to the Church; the Church was hostile to them. Lamennais could not break this mutual enmity. Can an individual ever do so?"

The Radical Imagination

EDIT. IRVING HOWE

New American Library, $7.95

WILSON C. McWILLIAMS

The "left," a product of the same middle-class era as liberalism, is defined by its relationship to the liberal "vital center." Liberalism supplies the first principles—individualism, the struggle to master nature, the consequent belief in labor as the source of value, and the doctrine of historical progress—and the left carries them to their logical conclusion. Though the contemporary left may have escaped the dogmas of Marxism, as has American democratic socialism, it bears the marks of that liberal inheritance, and the crisis of the left is only a part of the ideological crisis of liberal democracy.

Stuart Hampshire's essay "In Defense of Radicalism" makes this explicit. Radicalism, for Hampshire, is simply "unrestricted liberalism," based on the doctrine that value exists only in the "will and feeling of the individual," the seemingly anarchic tendencies of that thesis being modified by postulating "element-

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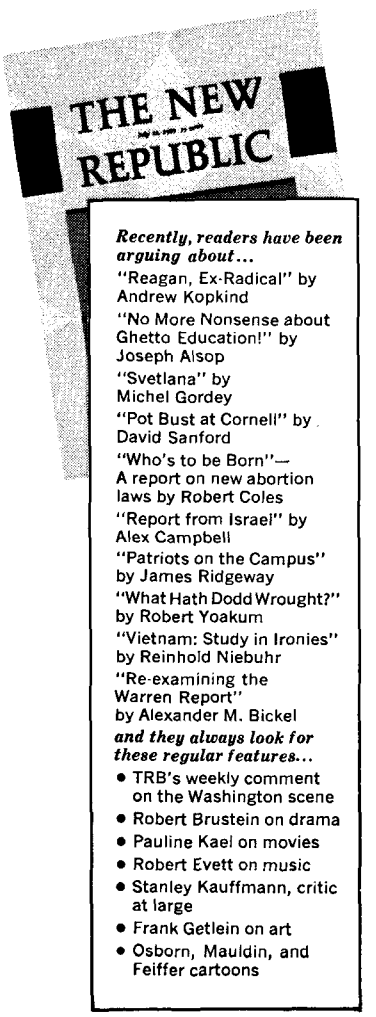
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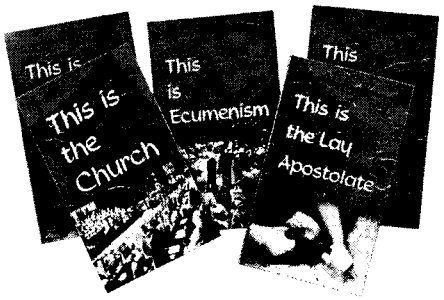

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ary natural rights" which—though outside the "will and feeling" of some individuals—they are nonetheless bound to respect through "democratic procedures." Even the contradictions of liberalism are preserved by today's left.

The crux of current polemics between the Old and New Left centers on the doctrine of historical progress. Irving Howe's comments on the weakness of New Left tactics are incisive: the poor, desperately eager for the goods of affluence, cannot serve as a new revolutionary class; this leaves the New Left dependent on its tactic of shocking the middle-class into awareness, and as a somnolent suburbia develops new immunities and new hostilities toward shock, it drives the New Left farther toward violence—at least at the verbal level. Yet many "New Leftists" might agree and still assert that their tactics, however weak, are the only alternative, though not a hopeful one.

The New Left, in other words, is doubtful of the doctrine of progress; Howe is not. (He accuses the New Left of being "reactionary" in its opposition to modern society.) The vehicle of progress, as Democratic Socialists see it, continues to be the "labor movement," a difficult creed to maintain in the face of bureaucratized unions. Yet it is a belief which they cannot, apparently, discard, lest progress become too doubtful. Bayard Rustin argues, in the context of civil rights, that "trade union people" are more reliable than officials —a thesis more dubious than the belief that labor is a "movement"; Howe prefers to regard current tendencies as a "phase" from which labor will emerge; S. M. Miller and Frank Riessman are at pains to show that labor differs from the middle-class, principally in lower concern for status.

Yet all of this ignores the issues. "Normal employment," as Michael Harrington points out, no longer exists. Faced with automation, the economic "power" of labor is vanishing. Miller and Riessman's evidence that higher status workers are the most pro-union and least middle-class suggests the truth: that labor is now on the defensive, seeking to maintain what it has already won and admired by those who share in the benefits of those victories. The opposition of unions to change may be overcome in such areas as civil rights; their support may be enlisted for other causes, at least at a formal level. Labor, however, can no longer be regarded as the spearhead of the forces of change.

Harvey Swados' study of the coal miners rings true. It is not simply unemployment or poverty which troubles him. Rather, he observes that even employment in automated mines or in new jobs would destroy "fraternity . . . and comradeship of courageous achievement": economic progress involves moral retrogression. As Henry Pachter suggests, it could not be otherwise: when strategically placed, unions may change the distribution of rewards in industry; they cannot make industrial labor personal or meaningful regardless of who owns the assembly line; estrangement from jobs is a necessary part of industrial society. Swados signals the fact that remedies must be sought through "political action": the logic of economic forces is decay.

Here the New Left would agree, yet neither they nor their elders have discovered a new revolutionary mass: they can only refute one another's hopes in labor or the poor. What remains to both is the intellectual, present and future. The bulk of the essays in *The Radical Imagination* deal with problems of philosophy and culture; a large number deal with the politics of education. Both "lefts" hope, in fact, that the expanding student population will provide the mass basis for a new movement. Students possess, Paul Goodman argues, the social and technical skills to cope with a modern society as labor and the poor cannot. Yet Goodman's lyric description of FSM at Berkeley slides over the fact that the skills and background of students make it easy to offer, and likely that they will accept, the rewards of affluence (hence the pervasive fear of "selling out"). And, given their limited experience, the young can only negate the values of society or accept the guidance of older leftists.

Yet apart from the "labor movement," the creed of the democratic left seems to reduce to faith in the intellectual's ability

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to direct the course of change. Howe accuses the New Left of "crude determinism" in excusing authoritarian regimes in new states; Michael Reagan's excellent critique of contemporary political analysis ends by declaring that changes in policy "depend heavily on prior changes in attitudes and ideology." This intellectualism is most pathetic in the section entitled "People in Politics" which discusses Albert Camus, David Diquieros, C. Wright Mills and Norman Thomas. Two intellectuals, an artist and a veteran publicist make up a curious image of being "in politics," let alone of political man.

Yet intellectualism is less distressing than intellectual failure, the inability of the left to cut its ties from the old liberal premises. The "radical imagination" is not the left imagination, not simply liberalism run more or less wild. Radicalism is based on a passion to understand so extreme as to break with custom and contrivance, intellectual as well as social.

Ignazio Silone's introductory essay would be an excellent point of departure. Silone observes that the real basis of the Old Left was not doctrine but a "choice of comrades"; ideology was only the instrument of deep personal need. Yet, he contends, the left chose falsely: the working class, the intellectual comrades were pervaded by the "nihilistic spirit" of modern society. Men without true comrades cannot find the joy which transforms alienation from what Howe calls a "complaint" into a thing of pride. The collapse of faith in history need do no more than direct our attention to concrete men; the decay of individualism only frees us for the fraternity which is always possible. Indeed, as Silone says, the fact that communion is possible is an affirmation of the possibility of human fraternity which commands us to "keep faith with the persecuted." The left's concern to master nature might then give way to a radical's eagerness to understand it. Faint chances, perhaps, but with more real promise than the tired falsehoods of all the varieties of the left.

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REVIEWERS

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rized ideas. Many have chosen to use his thought in their own monographs and articles and a few have been honest enough to acknowledge, with William Hamilton, that they were trying to make a creative misuse of the pastor, professor and anti-Nazi hero. Yet full-length systematic books have been rare.

John A. Phillips, who has just published the most provocative work in English on Bonhoeffer, saw no need to write a biography. The German's confidant and the recipient of the great letters from prison, Eberhard Bethge, has just finished a majestic 1128-page story of Bonhoeffer's life in German (and soon to be translated). Nor did he have to expound and summarize the thought of his subject, for John D. Godsey had done that in the first English work on Bonhoeffer. He saw no reason to impose an ideology on the theologian; an East German, congenial to Marxism, had done that in a major work. So Phillips chose to aim for the center of Bonhoeffer's concern, to listen patiently for hints and clues, to resist impulses to force a system on such fragmentary thought, and to see what Bonhoeffer's legacy means for the future of theology.

For Phillips, Bonhoeffer remained true to his bourgeois roots and consistent in his humanitarian impulse. His problem: how to relate these to life in the Church and to Christian theology. After a couple of early pseudo-profound and abstract essays, Bonhoeffer involved himself with the concrete daily life of the Church, visited America, dealt with pastors-to-be at a clandestine seminary and with good but godless men when he was a plain-clothes agent in the plot against Hitler. Abstraction in theology seemed pointless. His consistent center was the concrete, earth-bound figure of Jesus Christ.

In Bonhoeffer's lectures on Christology in 1933 he stayed with Luther, "At this man thou shalt point and say that he is God!" As the years passed he saw more and more need to relate Jesus "the man for others" to a secular world. Phillips regards his career as a life-long attempt to move from seeing Christ as a churchly presence to seeing him as a worldly one. Bonhoeffer vacillates between the two and is often unclear to the point of obscurity. But there is a definite movement.

In the end Bonhoeffer almost seemed to advocate a Christ-centered humanism so bold that it helped later popularizers to be honest to God, to walk in the secular city, and to witness to the death of God. Yet Bonhoeffer speaks dialectically and in enigmas. One of his very late writings insists: "God is teaching us that we must live as men who can get along very well without him."

One set of Bonhoeffer interpreters has been conservative, tying in his late probings to his earlier orthodoxy. Phillips is among the radicals who see a change (William Hamilton was his teacher and is a strong influence on the interpretation), but he does not require the reader to make up his mind on this apparently insoluble issue.

A generation has passed. For 20 years Christians have been busy knocking metaphysics, transcendence and religiousness; they have been using the figure of Jesus to do it. A typographical error in a chapter heading finds Phillips talking about "Christ, The Wordly Man" whereas the body of the text calls him "The Worldly Man." The two phrases have to be brought together. That he belongs to the world we all now know. It should have been so obvious, had the Church not shrouded him in the language of angelism. But he holds interest as author and finisher of the faith because he was also "wordly man," the bearer of an authority, a summons, and a promise that cannot be measured by conventional worldliness.

Today's theological generation has begun to see the sterility (for theology) in Christ-centered secular humanism. Without turning spooky, claiming to see visions, or erecting full-blown metaphysical systems, it is trying to relate worldly Christ to word-ly Christ. For that task Phillips' book and Bonhoeffer can also be of help. Bonhoeffer remains what Barth called him: an "open and rich and at the same time deep and unnerving man" who "shames us and comforts us." There is naught for the comfort of those who want to devise a Bonhoeffer-orthodoxy in this newest book on him: as always, he pushes us forward, even as he himself constantly moved.

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The Converts

REX WARNER

Atlantic-Little, Brown, $5.95

GEOFFREY WAGNER

Rex Warner has followed up his fictional studies of Caesar and Pericles with an investigation into the main philosophical currents of pre-Christian Rome and, more particularly, of pre-Christian Augustine. In any case, it is best to designate Warner's recent novels by some other term than historical, since he departs radically from conventions of current modes.

Even in the hands of relatively scholarly practitioners like Oldenbourg, Renault and Bryher, the modern historical novel derives from Scott, who boasted that he wrote about *real* people in romantic situations (Schopenhauer explicitly considered Scott a realist). Despite the Zolaesque accretion of detail in such work, we still have to do with fictional "characters" and plot; we soon find ourselves back with Margaret Mitchell and lesser writers of the genre establishing the girl, or guy, next door and then loading her or him with the period costume of trunkloads of local data. It is, in fact, a feature of such romance that its authors announce elaborate research.

There is certainly something endearing about Rex Warner's attempt to avoid the pitfalls of this convention and write what another *Commonweal* reviewer has well called "psychographs" of the time. One cannot discern a "character" in *The Converts*—possibly excepting Romanianus, Symmachus or the ascetic Jerome (whose real life was fairly fictional, anyway)—while there is scarcely any action or plot at all. It is a study of a way of life. What energy it manifests is metaphysical.

The book is the spiritual diary, or self-dialogue, of Alypius, a young provincial intellectual and admirer of Augustine who comes to Rome when the Empire is, as regards religion, at its most plural point. This embroidery or marginalia on the *Confessions* presents a priggish famulus—at one point Alypius wonders whether he should take a mistress "so that I might have an opportunity of discovering whether or not I was missing something of the greatest value"—and he is throughout awfully worried about his intellectual rejection of the mysteries of Christianity, which he terms "a faith that cannot be demonstrated"—one might add, whose point is that it is undemonstrable. For the efficacy of a belief, Warner reminds us, is no proof of its validity; the Manichean world picture, which temporarily swayed Augustine, had, as he suggests, far more "coherence." This lag—between pattern and prophecy—has of course dogged Christianity and been its abiding curse.

In addressing itself to the truth of cultural beliefs, *The Converts* can also be seen parenthetically to pun fourth-century A.D. Rome with contemporary America, where exist the same pluralism, overconfidence, the same cynical intelligentsia, not to mention corrupt Senators, ambitious Generals and extortionate tax collectors. Warner did not, I believe want to push these parallels too far—though the assassination of the Emperor

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Gratian has a distinctly up-to-date reverberation—so much as to indict the method of coming to a morality. The advance at the end, then, is not in terms of plot or narrative, but in that discovery of meaning, which is sometimes called God and which always surpasses the exercise of reason. The human condition is thus a strange paradox of freedom in bondage and we leave Augustine in Milan at the conclusion, undergoing the intense excitement of his conversion, brushed by the wing of "the infinite love and the infinite wisdom of God." Alongside him, Alypius prepares to be a Christian catechumen under Bishop Ambrose.

Rex Warner has earned a positive niche in the crypt of contemporary British fiction by his fine early novels, notably *The Aerodrome* (1941). One continues to read him with respect for he is a writer to be trusted to the end, but this is not an unqualified esthetic gift and can indeed come through as a certain lack of creative horsepower. The tendency to manipulate postulates, and offer testimony, however worthy, robs *The Converts* of ultimate power.

The Glossy Rats

DAVID CORT

Grosset & Dunlap, $5

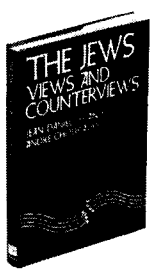
JOHN P. SISK

David Cort's new book is a gathering together of relatively short pieces all written in the '60s for such magazines as *Commonweal, The Nation, The New Republic* and *Monocle*. The title is less misleading than is usually the case with such books. There are real (as well as figurative) glossy rats in it; however, they may be outnumbered by the many other furred, finned or feathered creatures to which Mr. Cort gives his informed and mainly sympathetic attention. He is really only cool toward city-dwelling pigeons, which, he estimates, deposit 46 tons of ordure on New York City every day.

I mention this interest in the fauna because it is hard to separate it from something quite central to the book. Mr. Cort is not so much a naturalist as an ecologist, inclined always to consider the problems of man and beast in terms of their relation to the entire environment. It is the ecologist in him that is indignant with Consolidated Edison for its assault on the Hudson river, with Texas sheepmen for "blazing away in a fantasy Alamo" at the golden eagle, with the Corps of Engineers for a water-impounding system that has dried up the Florida swamps. And it is the ecologist who approves of Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* as a necessary scavenging operation.

Inescapably, a man with an ecological cast of mind is a conservationist, which for Mr. Cort is what the right kind of conservative should be. True conservatives are known by their unselfish concern for the whole habitat, as distinguished from local selfish conservatives who greedily plunder it. In the name of this selfish conservatism the air and water are fouled, people are slowly poisoned, families are demoralized, Negro talent is wasted, and insurance and utilities companies acquire monolithic power. Unfortunately, this kind of conserva-

"engrossing"



"An engrossing religious dialogue between a Jesuit priest and a Jewish lawyer" *(Christian Century)*, this book takes bearings on the religious significance of Judaism, as well as on the inherent historic and human situation both for the Catholic and the Jew. While the authors go beyond the conciliar text on the Jewish problem, they limit themselves to the essentials of the dialogue, but are not silent on any difficult question. $3.25

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tism takes full advantage of the rhetoric of patriotism. To Mr. Cort, however, it "begins to look like treason." A true patriot acts in the expectation of grandchildren.

Mr. Cort's interest in the whole human habitat and the events therein is omnivorous. At one point (in a piece on spies) he observes that he is no longer in a hurry to read the latest news, his chief interest being in history and geography. Nevertheless, he is in the process of demonstrating that he is, as usual, on top of the news. Indeed, one of the pleasures of reading Cort—whether on sports, the new math, politics, pollution, the press, Communism, anthropologists or Westchester gorillas—is not only the variety of his interests but the wealth of relevant current information with which he presents them. A Cort essay immediately induces the reader to expect the facts: to be told all about the pigeons.

The respect for facts, for the real complexity of events, distinguishes Mr. Cort's patriotism from that shriller kind that is so obsessed by simplifying ideas that it is protected from facts. Shrill patriots, whether of the right or left, are likely therefore to find many of his positions unsatisfactory, even bewildering. On the racial issue, for instance, he is without sympathy for the familiar formulas, convinced as he is that our commitment to the doctrine that all men are created potentially the same keeps us from realizing that civil rights and integration are two quite different things, and at the same time works against the Negro's need to maintain his racial integrity and pride.

Cort's respect for the radical complexity of events is itself an ecological thing: a determination to judge with an eye on the entire fact-habitat. Thus he is on the whole unhappy with McLuhan, yet deplores Dwight McDonald's dismissal of him because it misses the original truth in McLuhan's chapters on the press and advertising. Thus pieces like "The Vulgar Press" and "Wolves and Congressmen" are models of how to expose while avoiding the simplistic clichés of exposé writing. Thus he is able to look below the surface of the Tom Wolfe-Dwight McDonald altercation and see the clarifying fact of life that when hyperthyroids are irritated by subthyroids (*New Yorker* type writers, in this instance) they can make quite valid points in extreme ways.

Many of the pieces in *The Glossy Rats* take off from books and get Mr. Cort onto subjects he must treat too sketchily. Writing about Max Eastman's autobiography, for instance, he distinguishes between planning for conservation and planning for socialism. Given the conservationist orientation of the book, it could use a major essay on this distinction. Unfortunately, a major essay in this book would be no more than seven pages. However, it is not Mr. Cort's fault that the serious American periodical has become so short-winded. Unless we write for *The New York Review of Books* we must all learn to be sprinters. Mr. Cort has learned to sprint very nicely; nevertheless, I suspect that he would prefer to be a long distance runner.

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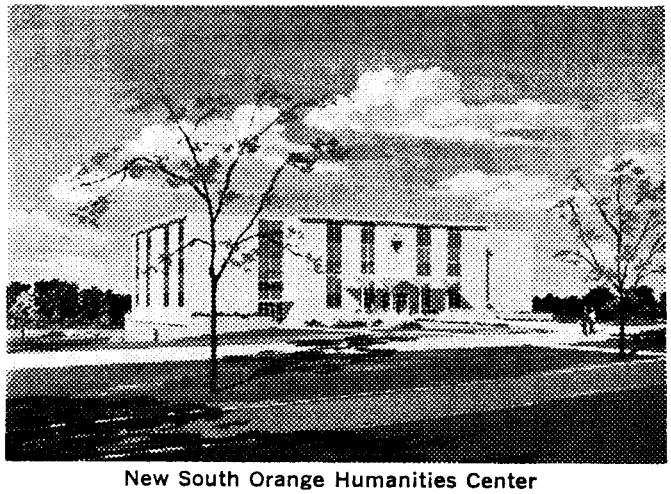

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The Peach Stone

PAUL HORGAN

Farrar, Straus, $5.95

ROBERT CORMIER

It would be inaccurate to say that Paul Horgan has been ignored during his long career as a writer. He received the Harper prize for his first novel; was later awarded a Pulitzer prize and a couple of Guggenheim Fellowships, among other honors. His books have gained attention from reviewers and have sold handsomely.

Yet there persists the feeling that somehow Horgan has been the victim of neglect, particularly by the more serious critics who are always assessing the state of U. S. letters. His name doesn't seem to appear in critical articles. Norman Mailer has never flexed his literary muscles at him. Edmund Wilson has not bestowed discovery upon him. Leslie Fiedler has not probed for Freudian impulses in his work. The major voices in American literary circles have shouted loud and enthusiastically about authors of lesser talent and no staying power—and anyone deeply concerned with contemporary literature, anyone who cherishes a writer whose noble purpose is matched by a dazzling talent can't help feeling a trace of bitterness at this peculiar kind of neglect.

Horgan hardly needs any defense, of course. One has only to read any of his books and stories to realize how he has quietly flourished through the years. His durability and growth are splendidly displayed in his new volume—*The Peach Stone*, a collection of 20 stories written over the past four decades, the earliest dating from 1930 and the latest from 1966.

It is difficult to avoid that overused description *minor classic*. Three stories in particular have been reprinted so many times that it is almost impossible to judge them anymore since they simply exist in their own timeless world and one envies the reader who will confront them for the first time. These are the title story in which a child's death thrusts a mother into a chilling, heartbreaking crisis; "The Devil In the Desert," in which a very human and elderly priest loses his life but overcomes evil; and "The Surgeon and the Nun," the dramatic, ironic and somehow tender story of an emergency operation on the old western frontier.

But the greatest pleasure in the book comes from encountering a new Horgan story, "new" in the sense of unfamiliar. "Tribute" is a typical example. Written in 1935, the story tells of the visit of a John Dillinger-type badman to a small restaurant during the depression thirties. The tale is clearly dated in the best meaning of the word because Horgan captures the essence, the particular *feel* of that time and place. However, like all Horgan stories, action springs from character, not simply from setting, which accounts for his paradoxical quality of

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"dated-timelessness," if there can be such a thing.

The author has divided his book into four sections, grouped by theme: childhood, youth, maturity and age. The order in which the stories were written can be found in the back of the book. The chronology is only of incidental importance, however. Each story is effective, none fails, so the choice of a favorite rests ultimately upon individual taste. "Black Snowflakes," in which a child grasps the meaning of death; "The Small Rain," in which grief is virtually made visible; "The Hacienda," in which the follies of old age merge poignantly with the memories—all linger in the mind.

Looking back on Horgan's impressive list of stories and novels as well as his non-fiction (his history of the Rio Grande river is a valuable piece of Americana), one suddenly realizes that it is just as well that Paul Horgan has not been "discovered" by the "serious" critics. He has been allowed to go his way without distraction, and American literature is the richer for it.

The Company She Kept

DORIS GRUMBACH

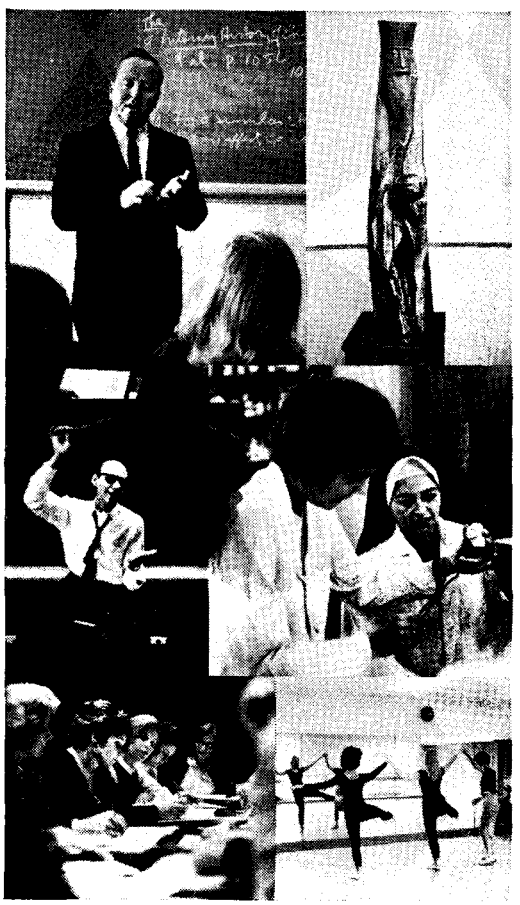
Coward, McCann, $6

STEPHANIE HARRINGTON

To anyone who had read *The Company She Kept,* Doris Grumbach's *Revealing Portrait* (according to the subtitle) *of Mary McCarthy,* the newspaper stories that followed the book's publication must have seemed too preposterous to be anything but a desperate attempt by the publisher's publicity department to drum up business for a clinker. The reports of, in the words of Martha MacGregor in the New York *Post,* "a Manchester-Kennedy . . . pow! lawyers, deletions, a threat to sue" about a piece of writing so unexceptionable, except in its failure to add anything to the understanding of Mary McCarthy, either in terms of biographical information or literary analysis, were enough to make you wonder if you'd read the right book.

But now that Mrs. Grumbach has assured us, in the New York *Times,* which is, after all, a newspaper of record, that Mary McCarthy did, in fact, object to what she felt were indiscretions in the manuscript, that she did consult a lawyer and that she did, like that other Vassar woman, make certain deletions from the galleys, it seems we must accept these claims of near scandal as a reminder that the absurd is a fact of life as well as art.

And having accepted the truth of these reports, it is difficult not to sympathize a little with Mrs. Grumbach, since it is almost impossible to imagine what inner sanctum of the private world of Mary McCarthy she could have violated that had not already been opened to the public by Miss McCarthy herself. The anger and dismay expressed by Miss McCarthy were doubly painful and bewildering to Mrs. Grumbach since, as she assured us in the New York *Times,* she had "scrupulously" (lazily might have been more accurate) "avoided every other source than the Subject" in collecting her biographical



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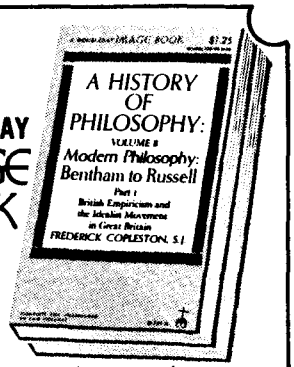

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material. "My education," Mrs. Grumbach pleads in her own defense, "had been provided, gratuitously, by the Subject. Not one whit of it was the result of scurrying about to friends, underhanded questioning of former husbands or lovers or 'enemies.' "

But in thus attempting to defend herself against Miss McCarthy's charges of indiscretion, Mrs. Grumbach convicts herself out of her own mouth of gross negligence as a biographer-critic. Her scruples about being "underhanded" and "scurrying about" to obtain information from others besides her subject may be admirable in the context of a personal relationship, but they are certainly inimical to the kind of scholarship that produces first-rate biography or serious literary criticism when that criticism, as in this case, rests on the premise that the work under discussion "is autobiographical to an extraordinary degree."

Mrs. Grumbach's apologia in the *Times,* however, seems to answer, by indirection, this charge, too, indicating that it was foolhardy to expect a serious piece of work in the first place when she only decided to take on Mary McCarthy because an editor asked "somewhere in the inner room of a dim New York restaurant, would you do a book on Her? And because you do not ordinarily eat and drink such sumptuous lunches in the proximate company of so many successful-looking people, and because you need the money, and because after all, She *is* a good writer (you've always thought this) and apparently a *fascinating* woman, you say yes, I will."

Those who have been victims of Mary McCarthy's lacerating irony will doubtless rejoice in the poetic justice that has condemned their tormentor to be locked in an ironic situation that would have seemed possible only in a McCarthy novel. For the merciless guardian of excellence now finds herself the subject of a book the quality of which would probably place it beneath her own withering contempt were she not its subject but its reviewer.

The only hopes for raising the book above this level, given Mrs. Grumbach's peculiar method of researching biographical data, might have been a piercing literary insight or an engaging style. But, unfortunately, Mrs. Grumbach seems to have fallen victim to an occupational hazard of her profession (she teaches English at the College of St. Rose in Albany), which is that she seems to have picked up more from her students than they from her. Mary McCarthy "is a satirist of such fury that she throws the baby away with the dirty bathwater," Mrs. Grumbach writes, sounding like a parody of a Mary McCarthy character, the well-meaning but cliché-ridden Warren Coe in *A Charmed Life,* whose speech is studded with "gee" and "darn it" and flourishes like "if you'll pardon my French."

Even her basic premise, that Mary McCarthy's writing "is autobiographical to an extraordinary degree," is a cliché. She deals with the body of critical writing about Mary McCarthy through a disturbingly superficial cataloguing technique, juxtaposing bits and snatches from critics who fall into the over-enthusiastic category with those in the over-critical category. Her own comments, which add little to the analytical dialogue, seem to be there because she realizes that she is supposed to do *something* besides quote other critics and give us biographical information we have already gotten from the books by, articles about, and interviews of, Mary McCarthy. She seems to be yearning to join the McCarthy partisans because when she does put her critical intelligence to work she exhausts much of it in arguing with her heroine's detractors (what Mrs. Grumbach has referred to as the "initial gaiety" of their acquaintanceship did not sour until after the book was in galleys). And this could have livened things up a bit if her arguments had been less perfunctory and she had not tried to assume an air of neutrality (those scruples again?) by attempting to balance her admiration with acknowledgements of Miss McCarthy's obvious and minor faults—her egotism, her unbelievable naiveté about the responses she provokes and her "oppressive" overuse of Latin, French, Italian and German words and phrases.

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Mrs. Grumbach is at her most interesting when she is discussing Miss McCarthy's tendency to be more essayist than novelist, even in her fiction, her use of characters as vehicles to make an intellectual point, as personifications of a point of view rather than as characters. Mrs. Grumbach points to "Oasis" as one of the most successful results of this allegorical technique, regarding it as a convincing demonstration of the failure of a morality, in this case the morality of the left.

Here I would disagree with Mrs. Grumbach's analysis on the grounds that Miss McCarthy's "conte philosophique" is not successful because it is the people rather than the morality to which they claim to adhere who fail. Personifications rather than people, caricatures of Miss McCarthy's real-life friends rather than characters, they are painted with strokes so broad that all their better features are obliterated and they emerge as unworthy of the values they claim and certainly unlikely to live up to them. Indeed, one faction agrees to participate in the Utopian project *because* they expect and hope it will fail. Under these circumstances, the only thing that seems to be demonstrated in "Oasis" is not that the liberal morality has failed but that it hasn't been given an even chance.

In *The Group*, as Mrs. Grumbach observes, the apron strings are finally cut, the dummies shooed off the ventriloquist's knee. And this, Mrs. G. believes, is the secret of the book's popular success, this absence of an omnipresent narrator which gives lady readers (who are, she points out, the novel readers in this country) the bitchy (my adjective) satisfaction of eavesdropping on other ladies in their foredoomed pursuit of happiness. She goes on about the deftness of what she considers this feat of legerdemain, so subtly executed as to have eluded the notice of the reviewers. What she herself does not seem to notice, however, is that, standing on their own two feet or not, the dummies remain dummies. Indeed, their dummydom takes on new woodenness, new glassy-eyedness. As one critic complained, we know more about Dottie's vagina than about Dottie. At least when Miss McCarthy's characters were merely mediums for her own massage, there were more jarring moments of impact.

Norman Mailer, in his review of *The Group*, sifted through its sawdust (and its gold dust) to exhume its real secret, its failed promise. "It is all true what she does," he wrote, "it is just not true enough. Her eye sees with a knife's edge, but her hand, overwary of drama and surprise, blunts the stroke. The book like a person in depresssion is dull in its basic condition—it comes to life only by a stirring, a moment of inspiration, then it lapses into dullness again. And details sweep in and sweep away the possibilities for each little scene to become sufficiently alive to wake up the others."

But he holds out a hope, a hope in "Her Method," her relation of person to object or attitude rather than person to person, her often brilliant deployment of details of manner and material (a legacy from Jane Austen, whom she much admires but whose tricks she has not yet

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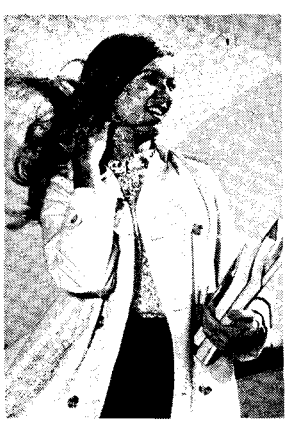

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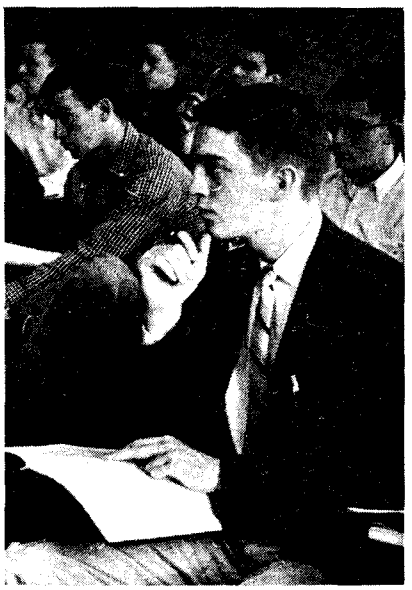

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mastered) in her vendetta against vanity and mediocrity, her "tool," as Mailer calls it, "by which to cut an ascent into some of the sheer ice faces of the social world."

One thing is certain: if the tool begins to cut deep enough, enabling Miss McCarthy to climb high enough, it is not likely that cartographers like Mrs. Grubach will attempt to trace her steps. The way will be too steep.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 5)

some of the modern sophisticates of the liberalistic class are in their attitude toward traditional history, its arts and its sciences. It is a wonder that they read history at all when the marvelous world of contemporaneity did not begin until somewhere between 1956 and 1960.

Storey implies that Dawson's method of writing in synthesis is not satisfactory because it isn't written analytically. His own conclusion, ". . . how shallow so much of the Christian and Latin culture of the Middle Ages really was," is an article of faith of modern liberalists, in or outside of the faith, but I have yet to see anything very profound or exhilarating come from these moderns in comparison to what was achieved with fewer resources in that age of Christian Latin culture. We have plenty of liberalistic pretension, sound and fury indicating nothing as they tear down the old walls and the cities and put nothing but a dubious eschatological future in their place. The great age within the Church of the rise of lay intelligence, for example, has up to now produced nothing but the voice of fisherwomen in the market places of the world, quarreling in their own little isolated worlds. . . .

Modern liberalism denounces the "triumphalism" of the past only to substitute the triumphalisms of liberalism and modern sophistication. There are no great minds with great souls yet apparent in the "new breed." There is a lot of cowardice, unwillingness to undertake the difficult tasks of life and religion as demonstrated by our forefathers, an at-

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tempt even to dismiss the past as "essentialistic unreality," "mythological" or "not contemporaneous." Just what is this contemporaneity if not a lot of passionate emotionalism and baby crying?

(REV.) A. J. GESING

Money to Hanoi

East Meadow, N.Y.

To the Editors: Regarding Adolph Schalk's "Samaritans to Hanoi" (Sept. 8), the U.S. Post Office, through its general counsel, Timothy May, advised officials not to send money orders to Caritas International, if the mailing was intended to reach North Vietnam, because it would be in violation of the "Trading with the Enemy" act. The decision was made after 25 members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation attempted to mail money orders or packages.

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E. G. TRUNK

Ad Protested

Berkshire, England

To the Editors: Attack the bishops all you like for their authoritarian ways, their incompetence, theological illiteracy, cowardice and jingoism and you'll get mostly applause from me. But to be associated with the double-page advertisement of the Hugh Moore Fund in a recent issue is unforgivable. The advertisement, plus the article by Professor D'Antonio in the same issue, amounts to a commitment by *Commonweal* to the campaign to impose birth control on the poor of the world with the added effect to increase, if possible, the contempt in which they are held by the rich and privileged. It is a bitter disappointment to those of us who look to the lay, liberal voice to assume more authority and responsibility. . . .

DICK TOOHER

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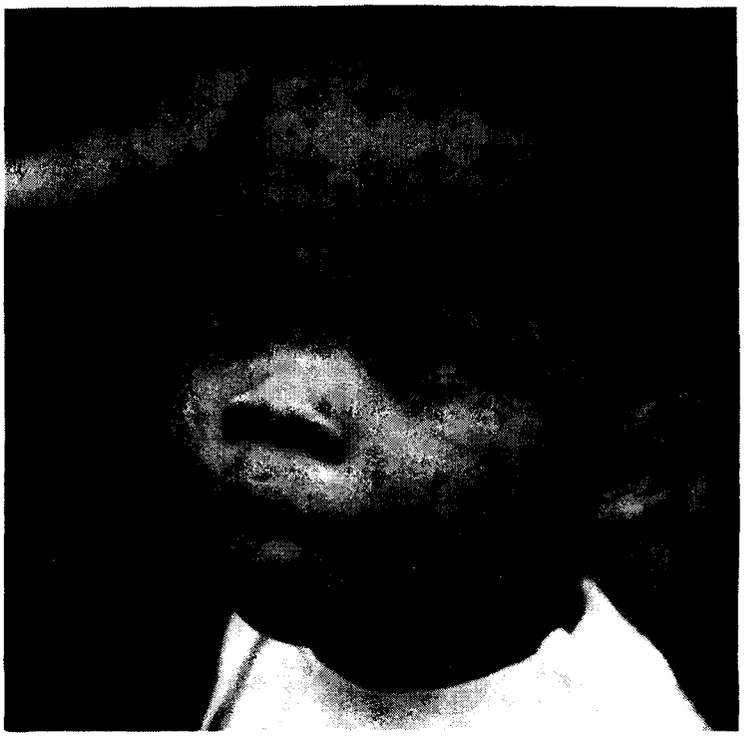
I was in prison and you came to me

as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren you did it to me



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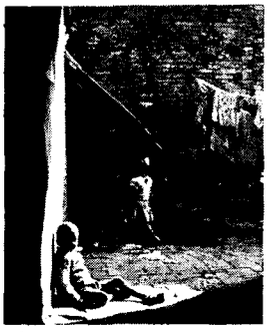

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